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COMMONWEAL

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REPARATION AND RECONCILIATION
Ignacio Martín-Baró

Continuing the Abortion Discussion: A LETTER FROM
GOV. MARIO CUOMO

Vietnam according to Oliver Stone:
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CORRESPONDENCE Strategy Time

A READER RESPONDS

Joining the debate

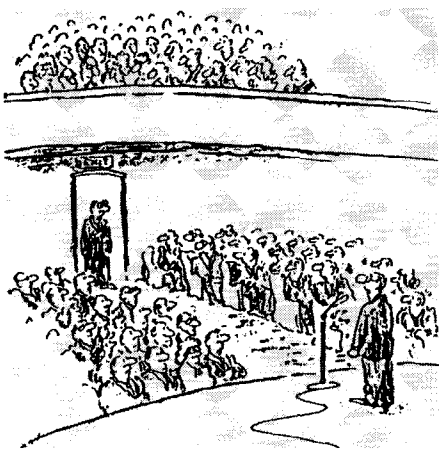
Executive Chamber
Albany, N.Y.

To the Editors: Your editorial invitation [February 23] to join *Commonweal* in a reasoned debate on abortion, particularly in the post-*Webster* environment, evokes this response.

Like you, I believe that the matter merits continuing reflection and debate, and that it does not benefit from obloquy, a word that describes too much of the recent public conversation about this topic.

Perhaps the best I can do right now, is to reflect on some of *Commonweal*'s commentary of the past six or seven months.

● Last August 11, in an editorial, "Too Many Abortions," you decried the number of abortions performed annually in our country. I agree that the statistics are sobering, as I think virtually everyone does. More than that, I share what appeared in that editorial to be your minimal expectations about the *Webster* decision's effect on the number of abortions. After reading *Webster* closely, I stated publicly that nothing in the decision changed New York law. And in October of last year I wrote in *America*: "The frustration and disappointment some may feel in the aftermath of *Webster* comes, at least in part I believe, from their reading too much into the decision and its effect on the law."



"Come in, Mario. We were just talking about you."

The same editorial brought up the issue of viability, finding in the language of *Roe* v. *Wade* and in the *Webster* decision "justification for viability testing at twenty weeks."

The issue of viability is of course a crucial one, and a matter of grave medical and ethical concern because at that point the unique relationship between the woman and the fetus changes in one important aspect. At viability, others could, all circumstances being benevolent, care for the child were it born.

Viability has been, is, and clearly will be, one of the pivotal issues in the discussion of abortion. For that reason, I requested the New York State Task Force on Life and the Law, which I established in 1984, to conduct a medical inquiry to determine the stage of gestational development at which the fetus can survive outside the womb.

The report the Task Force received in January 1988 from a committee of leading medical and scientific experts in New York state included the following findings: The threshold of fetal extrauterine survival is approximately 500 grams or 23-24 weeks of gestation; before this time, the fetal organs, especially the lungs, are not sufficiently developed to permit extrauterine survival even with the most sophisticated technology currently available; it is not likely in the foreseeable future that technological advances will lower the threshold for fetal extrauterine survival. The committee also pointed to difficulties of determining gestational age with exactitude, and noted that survival of infants over the threshold depended on a number of factors, including the level of care available.

The point is that whatever public policies might be made in the future should be based on sound scientific evidence. There are abroad some false assumptions about technology's potential for pushing back the survivability threshold. It may further serve to avoid future dashed expectations to point out, as State Senator Brandl did in *Commonweal* [December 1] that fewer than 1 percent of abortions take place after 23 weeks of gestation.

None of this is to say that the ethical and legal implications of the medical data should not be explored. Only that we should proceed with the caution the facts dictate, and without raising expectations that any law dealing with viability—even if enforced and obeyed— would lower the abortion rate more than minimally.

On the question of counseling, which the August editorial raises, I believe we should at a minimum be consistent. If we require, as we do in New York state, that family planning centers under Catholic auspices provide women—either through counseling or referral—information about the full range of options available, including birth control and abortion, then it would seem reasonable that other such centers, regardless of auspices, be likewise required to assure that their clients understand the full range of options, including adoption. If strengthened regulations are required to assure this full disclosure, I would favor that.

(Continued on page 196)

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COMMONWEAL 65

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Any leaders out there?

"God bless our country...and now back to war." Thus George Bush pronounced a benediction over the war games he observed in California last month. He might have also said, "Onward!"—in the spirit of his new defense budget. It calls for a 1.3 percent increase, including expenditures for the mobile MX, the Midgetman, the B-2 bomber, the Lance missile, the Trident first-strike submarine; an increase of 20 percent for SDI; and $18 billion for weapons aimed at the Warsaw Pact, $1 billion more than last year. At the same time: both superpowers are planning large troop reductions in Europe; the USSR intends to remove ten thousand tanks from Eastern Europe this year; the lead time for warning of a Soviet invasion of Central Europe has jumped from two weeks to several months; we are simultaneously negotiating significant nuclear reductions with the USSR; the Defense Department has downgraded the Soviet threat in the Persian Gulf. And the head of the CIA has testified that even if Gorbachev were ousted, "there is little chance that Soviet hegemony could be restored to Eastern Europe." Given these realities, what kind of response is that benediction, that budget?

Only presidential initiative can spearhead a cohesive military strategy (Congress only follows: in the last decade it approved $2.2 trillion of the $2.3 trillion the administration requested for defense). That strategy must be rooted in the administration's foreign policy and national security goals. In the post-cold war era, the Bush administration has yet to redefine policy in these areas. In fact, the president's words to Congress last year when submitting his revised defense budget still seem to hold: "I don't expect this to invent a new strategy for a new world."

This is a grand mistake, a failure in international leadership, a failure of imagination just when the world is looking for direction both to consolidate recent democratic advances and to short circuit any new division of the world into another set of competitive blocs. It is also short-sighted about domestic security: in the future our national defense will depend more on dealing with deficits, education, environmental protection, energy needs, infrastructure, housing, health care, and drug abuse than with Soviet aggression. A new world demands new thinking and a significant restructuring: a *perestroika*-USA.

Restructuring defense policy requires a reexamination of our present conventional forces' forward-defense policy (which rings the Soviet Union with half a million U.S. troops stationed abroad), a scaling back of our nuclear arsenal, and a major transfer of manpower and expenditures from military purposes—including research grants—to domestic human and economic needs.

Mikhail Gorbachev's principle, "reasonable sufficiency" in military preparedness, would be a good rule of thumb for us to pursue. For Gorbachev, that apparently means a large reduction in military expenditures: Soviet military spending fell by

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8.2 percent last year and will be cut a further 14 percent in the next two years. Dimitri Yazov, Soviet defense minister, has called for a 50 percent reduction in Soviet troops. The Center for Defense Information believes the U.S. can cut defense spending in general by one-third in the next ten years. Lawrence J. Korb, assistant defense secretary in the first Reagan term, goes even further; he says we can cut it in half in the same ten-year period. But that takes leadership.

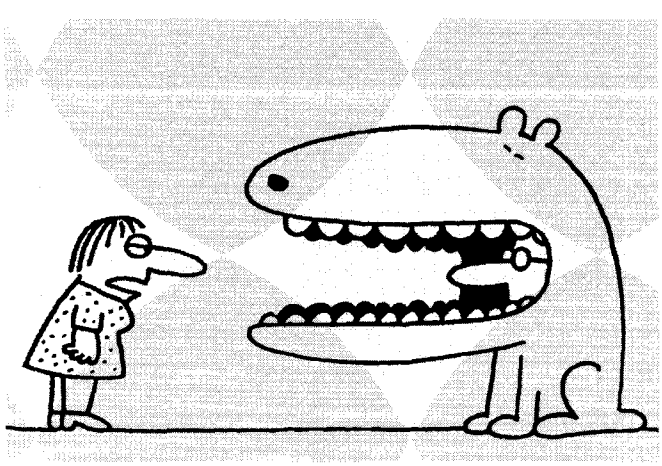
Our nuclear policy will have to change. The upcoming START treaty calls for dismantling one-third of our strategic weapons. As confidence increases through mutual reductions, enhanced verification, and diminished superpower tensions, the possibility of continuing a nuclear build-down will grow. It makes no sense to continue upgrading and enlarging our nuclear capability—as the president now proposes. On the contrary, the resources now spent on strategic weapons maintenance and development will be needed to dismantle outmoded and outlawed weapons, and to clean up domestic nuclear waste. But to accomplish this, leadership will be needed.

Currently, 9 million Americans are employed in defense, including 27 percent of our scientists and engineers. The tilt of manpower and material outlays committed to war preparation is staggering—and debilitating. Forty-five percent of total research and development in this country is directed at military-related projects, in contrast to Japan's 1 percent. (Even our foreign assistance is skewed; last year we spent $9.3 billion for military aid to the developing world but only $5.9 billion for actual development aid.) Converting a significant segment of our defense-oriented economy to other forms of production will not be easy. Since much of our manufacturing capacity was designed for defense production, such a change requires leadership. Conversion is needed, but it is not only a theoretical possibility. The Pentagon found in studying 100 military base closings from 1961-1977, that 75 of the bases are now industrial parks, 58 house educational institutions, and 42 are airports. These facilities have produced 138,000 jobs in place of 93,000. It takes planning and will. And yes—leadership.

Last month, the Air Force retired its twenty or so top-secret Blackbird spy planes. Mantis-shaped and a technological marvel, the SR-71 was capable of outrunning anything shot at it, of flying coast to coast in little over an hour, and of photographing a license plate accurately from fifteen miles up. Not one had been shot down in thirty years of duty. The plane was so fast its pilot could watch the sun set, pull up the throttle, and watch it set again.

But the sun has now apparently set for the Blackbird, as it must soon for massive defense budgets. The Blackbird needed as many as six refueling planes on long missions, and the $400 million spent each year on the twenty-plane fleet could maintain nearly ninety fighter jets. With on-site inspection and enhanced satellite photography now part of the surveillance equation, it was time to mothball the SR-71.

To the extent that present military spending contributes to a level of national indebtedness that weakens our general well-being and security, cutting it radically is a necessity. So is redefining our security goals in a new world. Mr. Bush: it will take leadership.



"I told you not to let him sense your fear."

THE HEAT IS ON

Out of the frying pan into the frying pan. Violeta Chamorro and UNO, a fourteen-party opposition coalition, won the Nicaraguan elections on February 25. Will they govern? Without bloodshed? The readiness of large numbers of Nicaraguans to vote for UNO, the good offices of Jimmy Carter and a phalanx of election observers in certifying a fair election, and the graceful concession speech of Daniel Ortega boded well for a peaceful transition.

In the self-congratulatory spirit adopted in Washington immediately following the election, Mark Shields and David Gergen in their weekly commentary on PBS generously divvied up credit for Mrs. Chamorro's victory between two Republican administrations and a succession of Democratic Congresses—the former presumably for supporting the contras; the latter for criticizing them. Too bad that Costa Rica's Oscar Arias got left out. But subsequent post-election events are likely to send credit-seekers running for cover.

The complete identity of the Nicaraguan government with the Sandinista party is quickly showing itself a source of friction over jobs and property—and over Nicaragua's general political and economic direction. Though Daniel Ortega went to congratulate the victor, the more ambivalent response of Tomas Borge, interior minister, and Humberto Ortega, defense minister, points to potential hand-to-hand combat in the duchies and fiefdoms of the bureaucracy; it foreshadows strident resistance to relinquishing control of the army and state security. Talk, at least by some in the UNO coalition, of reappropriating houses and lands distributed by the Sandinistas is another potential source of conflict.

Farm and manufacturing co-ops have foundered on economic sanctions and mismanagement, but they represent a way of keeping the economic pie larger and more equal than it was before the overthrow of Somoza in 1979. The oligarchic nature of the Nicaraguan economy before then represented an institutionalized

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form of injustice for the majority of Nicaragua's people. The Sandinistas' literacy campaigns and universal education, public health efforts, and redistribution of land and resources were aimed at redressing those injustices and in the early years of the revolution they enjoyed widespread international support.

And now the Nicaraguan people have "voted the rascals out." Whether it was weariness with the incumbents or with the war or with economic deprivation, the Nicaraguan people have used the advances and the deprivations of the past decade to transform themselves into a democracy—precarious though it seems at the moment.

The United States owes an enormous debt to the people of Nicaragua (including some $16 billion awarded by the World Court for our undeclared *contra*-war) as to others in Central America. The great danger is that in repaying that debt (and more covertly, redressing grievances against the Sandinistas), the Bush administration will further entangle the United States in a culture and a politics that—for better or worse—differ from our own, that we will persevere in trying to impose our agenda on a country whose national interest is not identical with our own. By definition, we cannot impose democracy in Nicaragua. It is something they must achieve for themselves. These tense weeks of transition may call forth a spirit of compromise and tolerance in which a just and democratic Nicaragua can flourish. We pray that is so.

FIGHTING THE DRUG 'WAR'

Drug use in the United States has been declining for several years. Cynics—or is it merely those who know political cynicism when they see it?—say the Bush administration is deftly maneuvering to claim credit for a policy victory without having to fight any hard battles in our cocaine- and crack-devasted inner cities. But that is where the political warfare gets messy. As the crack epidemic and concomitant gang violence intensify, the administration continues to emphasize law enforcement over less glamorous alternatives: social policy, drug education, or treatment programs.

Few dispute the need to meet the terror inflicted on drug-infested neighborhoods with a resolute police presence as well as an expansion of the overwhelmed judicial system. Drug dealers must be taken off the street. That said, the larger direction and the tone of administration policy need to be questioned. A recent exchange between William J. Bennett, our drug "czar," and Senator Edward Kennedy illustrates the administration's coy approach.

"I know children ...," Bennett said before the Senate Judiciary Committee in early February. "I do not agree with Senator Kennedy's statement that you can inoculate children against drug abuse by education," he added. "I think that statement is refuted every day of the week."

Spare the rod and you spoil the child, continued the headmaster. "And you might say this is not a very romantic view of children, not a very rosy view of children," Bennett said. "And I would say, 'You're right.'"

Bennett has a penchant for simplifying issues without really clarifying them. He presses all the right political buttons when fulminating against the evils of drugs, and has even said he is not morally opposed to beheading drug dealers or executing bankers who knowingly launder drug money. But his disciplinarian's convictions bring a false dichotomy to the argument. In a narrow sense he is right about the limited reach of education. As with the problem of sexual irresponsibility, there is no classroom solution to the drug epidemic in the inner cities. Those most vulnerable see the deadly consequences of drugs all around them every day. They are not ill-informed. But education obviously does work for some, as the decline in drug use demonstrates. And treatment programs can work for others.

Politically, treatment apparently sounds too much like a reward to attract broad support. Bennett has rejected the notion of "treatment on demand," calling it naive and wasteful. The value of such an open-ended policy can be debated. But expanding treatment opportunities is crucial. It may be that few addicts come by their addiction out of ignorance, but it's certain that few can shed their addiction without help. Many who are asking for help aren't getting it.

Funding for antidrug programs has gone up since Bush took over from an indifferent President Reagan. Bennett's proposed 1991 budget of $10. 6 billion is $4.3 billion more than the government spent in Reagan's last year. But, like the administration's rhetoric, the money is disproportionately allocated. Law enforcement will spend 70 percent of that budget, leaving education and treatment to compete for the rest.

Our putative commander betrays a fatally shortsighted strategy. Experts agree education, law enforcement, and treatment must be the three axes of any serious antidrug policy. Neglect one and the effort becomes misshapen and self-defeating. Some redistribution of the proposed funding is needed. Admittedly, therapeutic programs are no panacea. Failure rates are high even at the best centers. Getting addicts into such programs is only half the battle; they have to stay there. As some have suggested, drug testing and strict systems of rewards and punishments probably have a role to play in treatment procedures. But whatever the controls, greater access to treatment is vital. If treatment is too politically contaminated a word, let's change it. Call them discipline programs or castigation regimens. But it is time to find a way to make treatment programs politically palatable. That might even give law enforcement the kind of practical support it needs. Otherwise, the drug problem will only continue to be recycled through the prisons and back onto our city streets.

ET CETERA

The Tale of the Rumes When we last checked in with Andy Rooney he had been banished from the tube for three months by CBS, docked $200,000 in pay, and asked to expunge any hint of bias from his otherwise notoriously chaste

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mind. Apparently, this punishment was to stay in effect until Rooney recanted, his accusers relented, or "60 Minutes" ratings declined, whichever came first. During three ruinously Rooney-less shows, 20 percent of "60 Minutes" viewers wandered off to other stations. The verdict was in. Or was it just the appearance of "America's Funniest Home Videos"? In either case, CBS decided Rooney had been purged of sin and hurried him back on air March 4. CBS News president David W. Burke, who suspended Rooney, put it this way: "I am concerned that the balance between the needs of a news organization to maintain its reputation for fairness and objectivity, free of any inference of bias, and the ability of commentators to speak without undue constraint be maintained. I believe that balance has been achieved."

It seems more like the kind of balance you get when the tubby kid jumps off the seesaw.

WORLD WATCH

J. Bryan Hehir

NEW WORLD, NEW ROLES

GRASPING AN OPEN MOMENT IN LATIN AMERICA

There seems to be a connection between Lent and Central America. At least that is the way I think of it. In 1980 Archbishop Oscar Romero was assassinated just before Holy Week; the celebrated and conflicted visit of Pope John Paul II occurred in Lent of 1986; and every year in March—hence always in Lent—the U.S. Congress debates Central America policy as it decides the foreign aid bill.

This Lent offers opportunities in Central America not available throughout the 1980s. What creates the opportunity? The convergence of changes at the three decisive levels of the Central America question: geopolitics, regional relationships, and local conflicts. The geopolitical or U.S.-Soviet relationship has never been the basic cause of the Central American conflict, but it has been a contributing cause. The roots of the conflict—whether in El Salvador or Nicaragua—are sunk deep in the history and politics of Central American soil. But the U.S. conception of a "vital security interest" in Central America, the Soviet-Cuban involvement with the Sandinistas, and, by extension, with the FMLN in Salvador, all raised the local conflict to the level of high politics. The changes within the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe and the consequences in the U.S.-Soviet relationship establish a new geopolitical setting for addressing Central America.

Precisely because outside forces were never the primary cause of conflict, it would be a mistake to think that changes at the superpower level will guarantee a change on the ground in Central America. The superpower possibilities are limited but crucial: they can reduce the violence and open channels of diplomatic discourse. The superpowers provide arms; they can jointly decide to cut or stop the flow, especially important in El Salvador. There, they are not the only suppliers available to either side, but the devastation of the last decade would have been dramatically lessened if the superpowers had not fueled the fires of conflict. Positively, the superpowers can make it clear they are now openly, aggressively on the side of a negotiated settlement of the Central American conflict. This is a particularly important possibility for the United States, a point to which I will return. Of all the areas of cold-war competition the most difficult to change may be the way in which the superpowers relate to regional conflicts. Central America (and Cambodia) are the leading candidates for testing how significant the changes at the top are for those at the bottom of the diplomatic ladder.

The second positive force of the 1990s is the regional framework for peace which emerged under the leadership of the former president of Costa Rica, Oscar Arias. His determined role shaped a narrow but effective consensus among the Central American presidents that combined a cease fire, a call for free elections, and a dialogue among conflicting parties in each nation. The Arias proposal was an essential aid to the elections just held in Nicaragua. More broadly, the Arias framework placed the Central American leaders in the driver's seat in their region. U.S. policy in the late 1980s had to respond to the Arias initiative: the Nicaraguan election adds to the credibility of the Arias conception of a negotiated settlement in Central America.

But top-down solutions, whether geopolitical or regional, cannot substitute for action within the nations of Central America. In different ways there is a new moment in both Nicaragua and El Salvador.

The election in Nicaragua is the first step in a demanding process. The questions of whether internal reconciliation can be achieved and how much political and economic assistance will be available from the United States and Western Europe remain open. But the fighting which consumed thirty thousand Nicaraguan lives is no longer the dominant fact in Nicaragua. The new government of Mrs. Chamorro is pledged to democracy; the Sandinista leadership has pledged cooperation but seems ambivalent; and the U.S. now promises aid to the Nicaraguan economy rather than aid to the contras.

The harder case is El Salvador; it stands at a perilous crossroad. The results of the devastating battles of last November-December proved that the FMLN cannot defeat the government militarily, but they just as clearly showed that the FMLN cannot be defeated militarily. The moment is perilous because failure to press a diplo-

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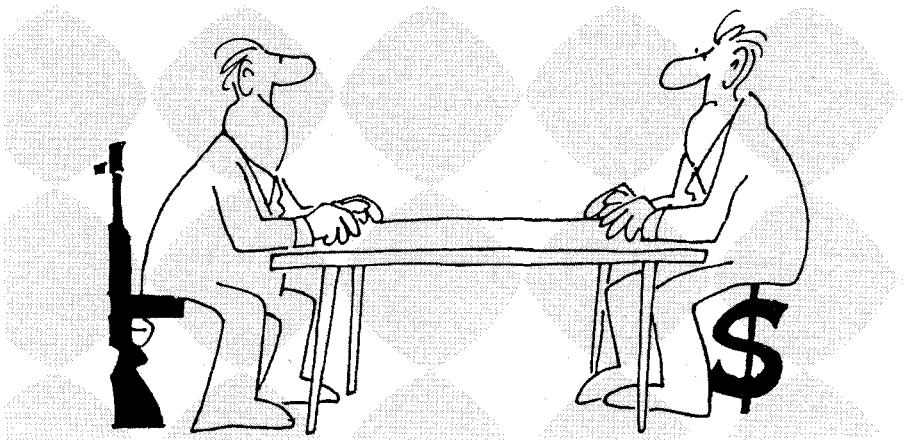

matic settlement at this time in Salvador could guarantee years of indecisive but brutal conflict. The prospect is Salvador as a Central American Lebanon. A number of careful observers have pointed recently to the narrow but real possibility that both sides in Salvador recognize the futility of a quest for a military victory. But movement beyond this conclusion to progress on the diplomatic front will take both internal leadership and external assistance.

This is where the U.S. enters the picture. It faces policy choices on Nicaragua, Salvador, and Central America as a whole. After a decade of divisive politics, the choices on Nicaragua seem relatively simple: there is bipartisan support for the new government but pressing questions as to how much economic assistance can be generated from a foreign aid account faced with urgent new requests from Eastern Europe, the Philippines, Panama, and Central America.

For El Salvador the policy debate is as conflicted as it was in the early 1980s. Military aid to Salvador will be a major struggle, with the Bush administration pressing for continuing present levels (or higher); a coalition of groups—with prominent Catholic support from religious orders, some bishops, and Central America peace groups—favoring a total cutoff; and Senator Christopher Dodd (D-Conn.) supporting a 50 percent cut in military aid, holding the rest in escrow unless the FMLN refuses a good faith offer of negotiation from the government of El Salvador.

The aid debate has been intensified by the killing of the Jesuits. While I believe the aid question is important, I am convinced it is not the central question this year. The key objective should be a high-level public commitment by the United States to foster a diplomatic settlement in Salvador and to tie this to a wider diplomatic agreement for the region as a whole. Arias has established the framework. Nicaragua has contributed a successful election; a focused effort is needed for Salvador. The United States should do two things: a personal representative of the president should be designated and entrusted with the U.S. effort to support and foster a diplomatic settlement in the region. The U.S. role should be to support the work of the Central American presidents, the UN, and the OAS.

While the U.S. has repeatedly said we support a diplomatic settlement, the implementation of the pledge has been unpersuasive. Someone with stature and the clear endorsement of President Bush is needed to signal a new diplomatic seriousness on the part of the United States. Several candidates are available, but none better in my view than Jimmy Carter. His track record on the Middle East negotiations and his crucial role in the Nicaraguan elections fit the requirements of the job perfectly. In addition to pressing a diplomatic resolution for the conflict, Carter could carry with him a pledge that the U.S. is prepared to back a diplomatic settlement in the region with the kind of large-scale economic initiative originally proposed in the Kissinger Report on Central America. The military ideas in that report killed it, but its economic perspective and promises were impressive. Kissinger and Carter are an unlikely team in American politics. But this is a rare moment for Central America; George Bush should use the ideas of one and the personal diplomacy of the other to grasp the open moment of 1990 in Central America. □

OF SEVERAL MINDS John Garvey

COULDN'T HAPPEN. DID

LEARNING FROM THE UNEXPECTED

This last year has been astonishing—so much so that it is by now quite commonplace to say what I just said. A friend of mine, someone I hadn't been in touch with for a long time, recently had surgery. I called him, and his first words were, "What do you think about everything that's been going on?" He didn't need to say what he meant. He meant everything happening in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe and South Africa.

There are people whose job it is to look for clues that will illustrate why this was all really inevitable. Future historians will trace various fault lines and surface cracks to show how foolish all of us were to have failed to notice the signs of the times—how, they will ask in the exasperated tones of people who were not there, could we *not* have seen that this was in the works? It is humbling and wonderful to have lived through this time, because it teaches something important about the unexpected, and the unexpectable.

There are lessons to be learned here, but they are not necessarily lessons about missed clues. And more lessons lie ahead, if we will pay attention to the fact that there

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are things we cannot now know. One thing can be said with certainty: those who think they can confidently say what will happen as a result of this remarkable shift in the political and moral climate of the world are terribly misguided. Nobody knows.

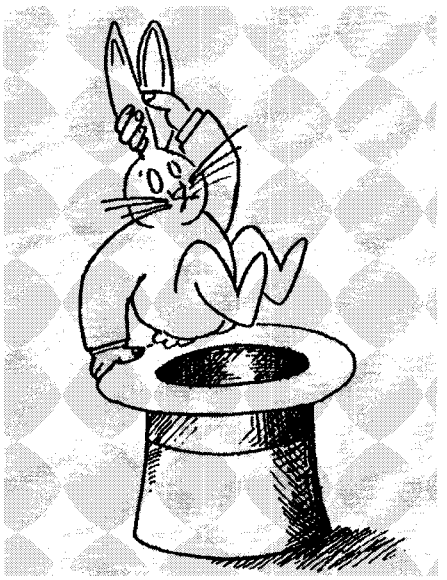
Some clues to the future are beginning to appear. We have already seen ancient hatreds revived. The anti-Semitism that was for so long Christianity's evil accompaniment has resurfaced in parts of the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, and the Christian vs. Muslim struggles that have characterized parts of Eastern Europe since the sixteenth century are with us once more. It is as if whole bloody agendas, put away in body bags and frozen to stillness with World War I, were alive again, or as if the legacy of the Ottoman Empire hadn't died, but only sat out a few decades while Western Europe went mad.

The rejoicing that accompanies this is in some ways entirely appropriate, and in other ways premature. One form of tyranny is dead; a bad idea no longer appeals even to French intellectuals or American academics. However, the fact that Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union face economic hardships that will make our Great Depression look like the days of the Gold Rush ought to worry us about the future. Free enterprise is not going to rush in and fix all this. Before they arrive at stable economies, whether they seek to base them on an American model or (more likely) something like the mixed democratic socialist/market economies of the Scandinavian countries, the hardships Eastern Europeans endure will have their effect on the political climate, and the result is not likely to be a happy one.

What interests me is not so much what will happen—it can't be known yet, at all—but our present reaction. There is rejoicing at the end of the cold war, and there should be. This is seen by some as a clear vindication of the free market, rather than the exhaustion of an unworkable idea, but it is hard to see how this follows. The Reagan administration's celebration of the unfettered free market and consequent greed-driven economics has turned the United States into the world's largest debtor nation, something his apologists are still too short-sighted to notice, or perhaps too frightened to contemplate.

Our rejoicing should be tempered by wariness. Some of this wariness should apply not only to what might yet happen in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, but also to our former habits of thought.

We have learned that things will not necessarily be what we think they will be. This is a refreshing lesson. Look at what's changed, now: the cold-war focus of the standard espionage novel will never be the same, unless it is presented as historical fiction. People on the right will need to find new villains. (Islamic fundamentalism is likely to be high on everyone's list, and it will do handily, since most Americans are so thoroughly ignorant of Islam that they will believe almost any scary story about it.) The likelihood of a nuclear war



between the superpowers has diminished to nearly nothing, removing a lot of assumptions about what we had to fear most for ourselves and our children.

There are new fears to replace the old ones, of course. The poisoning of our environment is the most obvious and, I'm afraid, the most likely to be seriously threatening; it's hard to see how or where this will end. Overpopulation is another, not unrelated to the first. The resurgence of nationalism that will be the result of the break-up of the Soviet empire, and uncertainty about the ugly forms it may take, is another.

What fascinates me, though, is the fact that what this time has left is an array of broken emotional shells, shattered expectations of good and bad things, replaced by new expectations. The metaphor that comes to mind is the hermit crab, which loses one shell and seeks another, almost any other. It takes what refuge it can find, however inappropriate, as long as it is vaguely shell-like.

We have a need to know what to fear and what to trust. That need is sometimes confounded. What has happened politically during this past year is almost as astonishing as it would be if one morning the sun were to rise in the West.

We have something profoundly important to learn from the very fact that we do not know what to expect. Our assumption is that things will usually be more or less the same, day in and day out, and we build our lives on that assumption. We expect water to come out of the tap when we turn the faucet; we expect the sun to rise in the East. The natural sciences are based upon this sort of predictability, and so are our political calculations.

How refreshing it is when something completely unexpected happens! There is an important lesson here for believers, I think. We claim to believe that the universe exists because, instant to instant, it is willed into being by God. We act, though, as if the creator of the universe had set it in place and wandered away, allowing the cosmos to run on its own, according to a set of unchangeable laws. One reason very small children have such a constant sense of wonder and delight is that they have not yet learned to expect things; what happens is always something of a surprise.

Christians profess a belief that Christ will return. I think most of us do not really believe this, although it was a central part of Jesus' teaching: "I say to you what I say to all: Watch." It was an important part of his teaching that we do not know the time of his coming. On a secular level we have seen something amazing happen in our time, something no one expected. We may begin to learn not to depend so much upon our usual expectations. It might be a worthy subject of meditation for us: at this particular moment we have no reason to expect that Christ is about to come again—but we do have his word that he will, and we have an example that what we don't expect to happen, can indeed happen, and quite suddenly. □

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REVIVING THE TRUTH, MAKING IT HEARD

THE LIFE AND DEATH OF OSCAR ROMERO

RICARDO URIOSTE

For me, it is both easy and hard to speak of Archbishop Romero. It is easy in the sense that I knew him, dealt with him, and could see the profundity of his life, the spirit of union with God that was the root of his entire existence—not just in his years as archbishop, but in his first years as a student, in his early priesthood, and in all the rest of his ministry.

But it is hard because his death still overwhelms me. He was a great man, a great priest, a great bishop, murdered because of the ignominy of this country, the injustice in this country, and the hatred of those who will stop at nothing, not even at the altar.

Archbishop Romero's homilies have already been published, and this year, at the tenth anniversary of his death, we will also be publishing his journal, which he taperecorded each night. But there's also something else which, I believe, is a great treasure: the notes he made during his retreats, where he opened his soul before God, before himself, and before the events of the times.

In one of his retreat notebooks there is the phrase, "I will dine with him." This comes from the Apocalypse (3:20). In the New Testament the Apocalypse is the book of the martyrs. And it is about the martyrdom of Archbishop Romero that I wish to speak. I think the Apocalypse is the only book in the entire New Testament that speaks of the martyrs and of martyrdom. Of course, the Gospels speak of Jesus as the one who gives his life, who hands over his life, and he is, you might say, the prototype of the martyr. As we know, two kinds of accusations against Jesus appear in the Gospels. One kind is religious: that he claimed he was God. The other is political: that he was subverting the people. The accusation of being "political" is as old as Christianity, as ancient as Christ. There's nothing strange or surprising about it, and it was one of the accusations that was also made all the time against Archbishop Romero.

In the Letter to the Hebrews we learn that without the shedding of blood there is no redemption, there is no salvation. John, in the Apocalypse, is distilling all the thought of the church of that time about martyrdom. He is writing at a time when the church was being persecuted in some places, and the aim of the Apocalypse is to buoy up persecuted Christians. It describes Jesus as the faithful witness, that is, as *the* martyr.

The martyr is the faithful witness. Our word "witness" comes from a Greek word which means "martyr." Where we see "be my witnesses in all places," in Greek it says "be my martyrs." Later the word "martyr" began to be applied to those who, because they were witnesses, gave their blood for Christ and the faith. I would say that death is not a biological event but a theological event: the death of a Christian is a theological event, and that is how we should see it. That is how Archbishop Romero saw it, and that is how it's seen by those who are faithful witnesses to the truth.

In the Apocalypse (6:9ff.) John says, "When he opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the witness they had borne; they cried out with a loud voice, 'O Sovereign Lord, holy and true, how long before thou wilt judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell upon the earth?'" This is the definition of "martyr" John gives. The Roman Empire didn't care if the early Christians were defending the divinity of Christ or the Trinity; it cared about the fact that they didn't adore the idols, that they were subverting the empire.

John also says the martyrs protest to God: "Lord, when will you do justice...?" (6:10). We might direct ourselves to God at this moment as well. After such torrents of blood have been shed, after seventy thousand people have been murdered, including seventeen priests, four nuns, and an archbishop, where is justice? In this country, this democratic, Christian country, we carry on as if nothing had happened. Other countries, right here in Central America, that are not democratic or Christian haven't killed a single priest or nun.

In response to those who ask, when will there be justice, John sees that the persecution is going to continue, that people will continue to die, but that it's necessary to continue witnessing to the faith, because for the Christian death should be a vocation. Just as death is a theological and not a biological event, so too

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for the Christian who gives and wants to give himself in true witness, death is a vocation, a call. The last reference I'll make to the Apocalypse (from chapter 3) is to the phrase we found in Archbishop Romero's retreat notes: "And I will dine with him." Verses 19-20 say: "Take heart and be converted. I am at the door and calling; if someone listens to my voice and opens the door, I will enter and dine with him. I with him and he with me."

Yet we should be very clear on one thing: we are not to seek martyrdom. What we should aim for is a life of witness. We should seek a life which really gives the kind of witness that's needed, but we should not seek martrydom itself.

We should also be very clear on what the criteria are for determining who is a genuine martyr. The first is that God is present as the root and summit of the person's life. Second, the person has been connected with other people. That is, we're not just talking about a vertical relationship with God, about a person who's spent his or her whole life singing alleluias, and has known God only in that way. We're talking about someone who has also discovered God in other people. This is absolutely necessary. Third, the giving over of one's entire life to the Christian ideal—that your whole life revolves around the ideal that Christ offers us. And the fourth, I would say, is the acceptance of death for the faith itself.

These four elements were present in the life of Archbishop Romero. It's been said that the degree to which a tree flowers depends on how deeply it's rooted in the ground. That was Archbishop Romero —someone who flowered because he was so deeply rooted in God. For him God was the absolute. He made God the infinite in his life. He tried to communicate all this to others, to share it with them. What most impressed one about Archbishop Romero was his capacity for encounter with God, his ability to root his life totally in God. That was the source of his strength and his vitality. A journalist once asked him, "Where do you get the strength to carry on in spite of everything?" Archbishop Romero answered, "You ask at an opportune moment, because I've just returned from my retreat. That's where I find the energy and the strength."

I saw this myself on many occasions. I remember one time, in December 1979 at the *Hospitalito* [the Divine Providence Hospital, where Archbishop Romero lived, and was later killed]. It was early in the morning, at breakfast time, and the archbishop was being visited by Cardinal Lorscheider of Brazil and a member of the civilian-military junta which, at that moment, was governing El Salvador. At one point, Archbishop Romero got up and left. Now, I knew those men had come there to see him, not me, so eventually I got up and went looking for him. I went to his apartment, but he wasn't there; I went to the visitors' room, the kitchen and the garden, but he wasn't there either. Finally, it occurred to me to look in the chapel, and there he was, kneeling before the Blessed Sacrament, which was exposed. I went up to him and said, "They're waiting for you." And he said, "That's okay. They can wait. I'll be coming."

I think that Archbishop Romero never said anything, never did anything, without first consulting with God. That's why he was sure of what he said. He didn't care what the accusations and the threats were, he was sure of the things he'd said because he had been in dialogue with God about them. This was a man who had discovered that the root of his existence, of his whole being—as a person, as a priest, as a bishop—was God.

I remember another time when we went to Rome together. As soon as we got there, after traveling all night long, he invited me to go to the Basilica of St. Peter. The confessional altar, where the tomb of Peter is said to be, is right at the entrance to the basilica. He knelt down right there and began to pray. I knelt too, but after ten minutes I got up. But he continued for another twenty minutes, totally absorbed in prayer.

When I'm asked, what was it about Archbishop Romero that I most admire, I've always answered: the sanctity of his priestly life, his unity with God, his interior life and spirit, because everything else that he was came from all that. For me, that's the kind of person who is really convincing; someone like that can really bring people along, not just by words but by the person's life itself, which gives this witness.

Archbishop Romero was very faithful to his spiritual life. He went to confession every week, and he consulted with his spiritual director. He sought out guidance for what he was doing. Like all holy men and women who have felt the mystery of sin, he felt the mystery of our freedom, which is capable of saying "yes" but also of saying "no." He had the humility to seek God with patience. All this is something which appears very rarely, and that is what made Archbishop Romero capable of being a prophet.

Now, prophets aren't innovators, and Archbishop Romero was no innovator. The prophets are those who speak of the eternal things, as they apply at the moment. The prophet always speaks of God and of the circumstances in which we find ourselves. The prophet speaks of respect for life, and that is older than the first page of the Bible. The prophet, then, in a certain sense, is the great conservative, the one who wants to conserve the great values that God has given us.

Archbishop Romero spoke like this, and when he did he was accused of getting involved in politics. There's nothing that makes me think more of how unjust and stupid people can be. He spoke out about all the people who had been tortured, massacred, and hurled into rivers. That isn't getting involved in politics; that is speaking of the Fifth Commandment: Thou shalt not kill. Every prophet, every bishop, every priest is obliged to speak out like that. The prophet is the one who is faithful to God, who says, God is asking this of me, and I'm going to do it, while others say, "Who knows, this could be dangerous, and you know, you've got to be prudent."

We speak a lot about the virtue of prudence, but not so much about the virtues of fortitude and justice. The prophet is imprudent because God was imprudent, because Jesus was imprudent. Because if our Lord hadn't said what he said, they wouldn't have crucified him, either. As a prophet, Archbishop Romero was able to cleanse the language. He revived the truth, made it heard, and many believe that is why he was killed. The truth,

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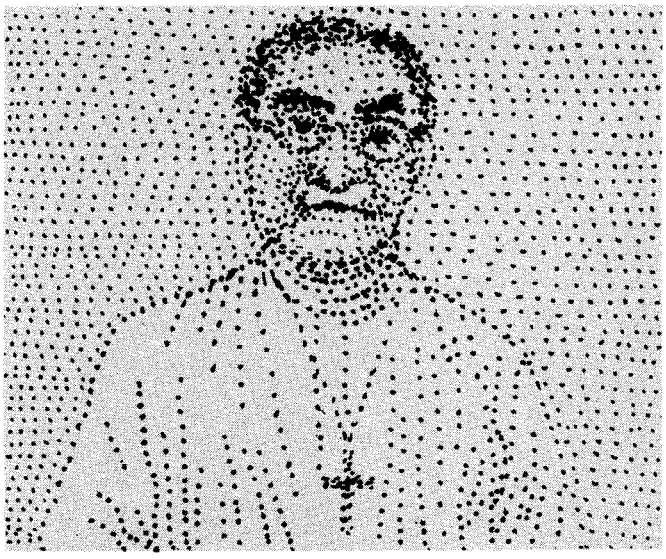

in countries like ours, will always have such consequences. There were those who couldn't tolerate the truth Archbishop Romero proclaimed, just as there were those who couldn't tolerate the truth that Jesus proclaimed.

It is the absolutizing of God which enables us to see other people and their situations clearly. St. Mark tells the story of the blind man cured by Jesus who, when asked if he could see, replied, "I see people, but they look like trees." He couldn't see them well. When we're not capable of seeing people in their true situations, we're seeing them as trees. The people are suffering, going hungry, being repressed, enduring so many other things, but for us they can be like trees, like things. But the prophet is one who sees people and their situations as they really are, who feels intimately the things that are going on around him and isn't able to just let them continue. He is the one who suffers those things, just as Jeremiah and Isaiah and all the true prophets suffered.

The prophet is one whose very existence is a sign, and who lives the values of the Kingdom in his or her personal and community life. He or she is also one who carries on in faith, in spite of all misunderstandings. It was like that with Archbishop Romero. Many of us—for fear or whatever other reason—criticized him, judged him, abandoned him. It reached the point where one day he said, "Even if I wind up all alone, I'm going to carry on." And even today we're still afraid to have a picture of him or a book about him in our houses.

I don't want to conclude without mentioning some things he wrote during his last retreat. He died on March 24, 1980, and February 25 of that year he began his last retreat. And this [Msgr. Urioste holds up a simple schoolchild's notebook]—I even tremble when I touch it—is where he wrote his notes during that retreat. He wrote about his death—let us say, he wrote about his martyrdom.

In one place, for example, he says, "I feel afraid of violence. I've been warned about serious threats against me for this coming week." That is to say, he felt fear, just as Jesus did in Gethsemani. The scripture writers tell us that this, even more than the crucifixion, was the most difficult part of Jesus' Passion, when he saw there in Gethsemani all that was going to happen to him.

Archbishop Romero was convinced that he was going to be killed. And nevertheless he writes, honestly and humbly, "I feel afraid of violence. I fear the weakness of my flesh, but I ask the Lord to give me serenity and perseverance." In other words, he's in no way disposed to take even one step backward, even though he knows that if he carries on, he's going to be killed. He was offered the chance to leave the country, he was offered all kinds of positions in various places, but he said, no, I'm going to stay here.

In another place he writes, "Father Azcue came and heard my confession." Father Azcue was his last spiritual director, and on the day he was killed, Archbishop Romero went to have Father Azcue hear his confession. Later, Father Azcue said Archbishop Romero had told him that day, "I want to feel clean before God." The faithful witness wants to feel clean before God and, of course, before the people. And on this same page in his retreat notebook, he criticizes himself for "not being careful enough about my confessions and my spiritual life," and then he remakes his life plan, and among the specific things he mentions are, "Get up at midnight to pray." He also mentions "disciplines," by which he means punishing himself physically (I think this must mean mortification of the flesh), things like fasting on Fridays, things that you and I don't do but which were vital for him. They helped make him who he was.

On this same page in his retreat notebook, he writes, "My other fear is about the risks for my life." He feared, he knew, he foresaw his death. He was receiving all kinds of threats at that time, even public ones. The ads in the newspapers against him those days were, in effect, threats. But there were others that were even more clear. And there was another sign that he was certain he was going to be killed.

When a bishop dies a group of priests is in charge of naming an interim successor to serve until the new bishop is named. Now, Archbishop Romero had said he wanted three more priests added to this group. And I remember one day at the *Hospitalito*—we were having a meeting there, and it was about ten or twelve days before he was killed—and he asked us, "Have you done the paperwork to have the three priests added?" We had not. He stood up and said, "Do it, and do it now!" Later on, after his death, we remembered that incident, and we said to ourselves, "Well, he knew...."

On another page in his notebook, he wrote, "It's hard for me to accept the violent death which, in these circumstances, seems very possible. The papal nuncio of Costa Rica has warned me about imminent dangers for this coming week. My disposition" —and here remember the criteria we mentioned earlier for a genuine martyrdom, especially the accepting of the Christian ideal and the willingness to give one's life for the faith itself—"should be to give my life for God, however it should end. The grace of God will enable us to live through the unknown circumstances. He aided the martyrs and, if it should be necessary

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that I die as they did, I will feel him very close to me at the moment of breathing my last breath. But more important than the moment of death is to give him all my life and live for him and for my own mission." He is not seeking out martyrdom. He sought to live a life of witness.

Later he writes, "In this way I make concrete my consecration to the heart of Jesus, which has always been the source of inspiration and Christian joy in my life. And I put all my life under his loving Providence, and with faith in him I accept my death, however difficult it may be."

He doesn't offer his life for something in particular. "I don't want to state an intention, for example for peace in my country or for the flowering of our church." Why does he take this position? Because he has his roots deeply in God, even at the moment of his death. "Because," he says, "the heart of Christ will know how to give my life the meaning it requires."

He ends with these words: "To be happy, for me it is enough to know for sure that he is in my life and in my death. And in spite of my sins, I have put my trust in him and I will not be confounded," he quotes a psalm. "And others will carry on the work of the church and the country with more wisdom and more sanctity."

So he dined with the Lord, and now he's with him and with our church and with our country. He's also with the poor, whom he defended so much and for whom he died. I always say that Archbishop Romero was martyred for his love for the poor, for defending them, and for the magisterium of the church. That magisterium is very clear: it says the church should make a preferential option for the poor. To really love the poor requires concrete actions. □

CAN THIS WAR EVER END?

NARROWED OPTIONS IN EL SALVADOR

PATRICK LACEFIELD

"All priests are Communists and Jesuits are the worst scum." That's what Roberto D'Aubuisson had to say in the early eighties about Ignacio Martín-Baró, S.J., and his compatriots who taught at the University of Central America (UCA) on the outskirts of San Salvador. Martín-Baró didn't look like a dangerous character. But, then again, neither had Archbishop Oscar Arnulfo Romero, who was cut down by a rightist assassin while celebrating Mass in March 1980. D'Aubuisson was widely regarded as the architect of that slaying. Today he is the power behind President Alfredo Cristiani.

What did the rise of the far-right ARENA party mean for El Salvador, I'd asked in a spring 1989 interview with Martín-Baró. He smiled, a little sadly. "A return to the old ways," he sighed, remembering with me the early eighties when Salvador was the "killing fields" of the Western Hemisphere. "A return to power of the old money." Martín-Baró's charts and graphs and papers told uncomfortable truths about the privileged few in Salvador who have much and the many with too little. They were dangerous stuff.

Truth is the most revolutionary weapon, someone once said. Others swear that the truth can set you free. It can also get you killed, as the six Jesuits, their cook, and her daughter discovered November 16.

That killing—and the storm of protest that swept over the Salvadoran government—made U.S. assistance to the ARENA government a point of contention. Immediately after the massacre, the Bush administration easily turned aside efforts in the House and Senate to cut 30 percent of the $85 million in military aid in the 1990 budget. Still, the pressure continued to build for a fundamental reevaluation of Salvador policy in Washington, even as Cristiani scrambled to defuse the uproar over the killings—with the assistance of the U.S. embassy.

The initial reaction from Cristiani and the embassy was to cast doubt that the army could be guilty and to throw suspicion onto the FMLN guerrillas. U.S. Ambassador William Walker noted that "whoever committed this heinous crime—whether the extreme right or the extreme left—is doing the work of the FMLN." As late as January 2, in a conversation with Congressman Joseph Moakley (D-Mass.), Walker said that "any group can get uniforms," again implying that the FMLN could have done the dirty deed.

When a witness to the slayings, Lucía Barrera De Cerna, came forward to accuse the military, she was taken with her husband under the protection of the Jesuits and the Spanish Embassy. Spirited out of the country, she was separated from her Jesuit escorts by the FBI who explained that several days questioning was required to "evaluate" the risks to her life. Both the woman and her husband were isolated and interrogated for four days

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by FBI agents and by Lt. Col. Manuel Antonio Rivas Mejía of El Salvador's Special Investigative Unit.

The account Lucía Barrera later provided the Jesuits and her U.S. lawyers shows that the questioners were as abusive as they were relentless. "Who among the priests told you to lie about what you saw?" they demanded. They spoke of extraditing her and her husband and baby daughter back to El Salvador—to take their chances with the killers and their allies. "I am disgraced that both you and I are Salvadorans," Lt. Col. Rivas spat at her.

Her husband, Jorge, was called "a queer," was told not to discuss his interrogation with his wife, and was asked how many family members fought with the guerrillas. None, he responded, telling instead of his two brothers in the army. When he explained that his wife had worked as a cleaning woman for the priests for eight years, one FBI agent asked, "Are you sure that was all that she did for them?"

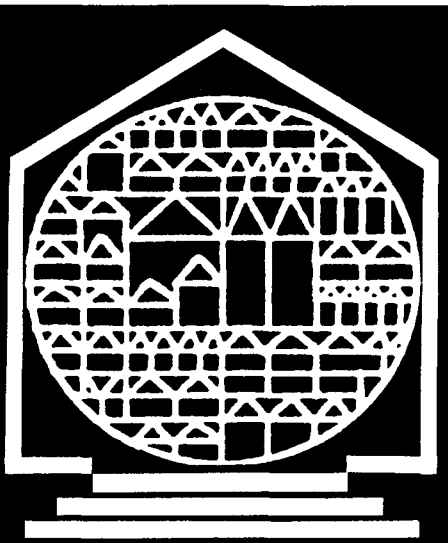
Far from home and intimidated, the Barreras changed their story and insisted they had seen nothing. Cristiani and the embassy immediately spread the news far and wide. Salvadoran Archbishop Arturo Rivera y Damas claimed that the woman had been "brainwashed" and attacked the U.S. embassy. Released to the Jesuits by the FBI, the Barreras returned to their original story.

Some time after the slaying, according to reliable sources, Cristiani was visited by a group of businessmen, including some from the "fourteen families." A number had been educated at the UCA and knew several of the priests. Enraged by the killings, they pledged Cristiani political support to find those responsible. It was support Cristiani sorely needed: he had almost totally lost effective authority to the army at the start of the FMLN offensive.

"You have to understand that these people are businessmen," Rubén Zamora, the leader of the Popular Social Christian party, said in explanation during a February visit to New York. "They know how to make deals. They do not represent a majority in the oligarchy but they are significant. They see the economy in ruins. They see the FMLN militarily strong enough to threaten the capital. They know that when the FMLN overran neighborhoods, they didn't steal anything from the stores. When the army recaptured neighborhoods, the soldiers looted shamelessly."

In early January, before Cristiani went public with the results of the official investigation, the U.S. embassy knew that the killers were from the Atlacatl Battalion, U.S.-trained and the pride of Salvador's increasingly "professional" army. U.S. Army Maj. Eric Buckland heard from a close friend, Col. Carlos Avilés, that Col. Guillermo Benavides—director of the military academy and commander of the zone that included the UCA—had ordered the murders. Avilés also confided that Benavides would not have issued such an order without a go-ahead from higher-ups in the army. Later, in fact, in depositions given to a judge by two lieutenants involved in the attack, Benavides is quoted as saying that "we have to carry out our part of the plan."

"I believe that each zone commander was issued orders that night to 'take out' certain people," offers Zamora. "The perception



Harmony*

*"WHEN THE CHURCH WAS THE HIGHEST BUILDING, THE TOWER WAS AN ESSENTIAL SYMBOL. NOWADAYS, IT IS WELL TO ACHIEVE THE SAME PURPOSE NOT BY AN OUTWARD GESTURE BUT BY AN INWARD GRACE."
LEWIS MUMFORD
COMMONWEAL APRIL 15, 1925

*"ARTISTICALLY, IT IS SAFE IN OUR TIME TO DEAL IN FRAGMENTATION. WHAT IS DIFFICULT IS TO CREATE STRUCTURES OF WHOLENESS, INTEGRITY, AND HARMONY."
EMIL ANTONUCCI
COMMONWEAL JUNE 2, 1989

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by the army was that the 'normal' rules didn't apply. The rest of us were in hiding. The Jesuits were unlucky enough to be at home."

Maj. Buckland, who earlier had vowed to resign his commission if it turned out the military was involved in the killings, reported the Avilés news to his superiors. They didn't believe him and forced him to take a polygraph test. The embassy then went to Salvadoran military Chief of Staff René Emilio Ponce with the information and the name of the source. Avilés was placed under detention for a time. He is now released but his career is a thing of the past and—once attention is focused elsewhere—his life may be short.

On January 16, President Cristiani announced the arrest of eight military men, including Col. Benavides, on charges of killing the Jesuits and/or covering up the deed. One enlisted man is still at large.

So, too, is the truth. The arrest of Benavides was, in the words of Guillermo Ungo of the Democratic Revolutionary Front, "the tip of the tip of the iceberg."

"The judiciary system down there is not exactly a model of justice," Assistant Secretary of State Bernard Aronson testified in January before Congress. "In fact, Salvadorans do not have a judicial system worthy of the name." When judges are not "connected" already to the army and cannot be bought off or intimidated, they are killed or forced to flee for their lives. To this day, no Salvadoran officer has ever been convicted of a serious crime in connection with human rights abuses.

For his part, Cristiani has refused to speculate about the involvement of "higher-ups," saying that he awaits further investigation. But the strategy of Cristiani and the U.S. government now is "damage limitation." Is Benavides a sacrificial lamb, a Lt. Calley of sorts? Perhaps. The point is that even in the unlikely event that Benavides is convicted, there is no guarantee—given the power of the army—that he wouldn't be released once the heat is off.

"Nobody, but nobody has any illusions about the army now," Rubén Zamora told me. "That's very different. And you have to realize that many in the army—in the hard-line sector—are accusing Cristiani of selling out to the Americans. They call him *'El Gringo.'* The U.S. government doesn't have to pressure Cristiani nearly as much as the army. They are the real power—more than ever."

Cristiani and the U.S. State Department now boldly talk of the necessity of a political solution to the conflict. Gone are the days when U.S. proconsuls and their military group leaders would confidently forecast the defeat of the guerrillas in five to seven years. The reasons are simple. The economy is a disaster and getting worse. World prices for coffee, Salvador's number-one money-maker, are way down. What looked to be a bumper crop of coffee in the eastern part of the country turned out miserably. The November offensive by the FMLN caused millions of dollars in damages.

"There cannot be an economic revitalization without peace," Cristiani admitted publicly for the first time last month. This is no small admission from a man who won the 1989 elections largely on a "can-do" promise of economic vitality. On top of all this, Cristiani will have to make do with $50 million less in U.S. economic assistance.

The prospects for a political solution were affected in large measure by the FMLN November offensive. It was both a success and a failure for the rebel cause. The well-prepared offensive was launched out of frustration with the pace of the previous round of talks with the government. The army had exploited a unilateral guerrilla cease-fire to attempt to attack the FMLN's rear-guard areas. Security forces and death squads stepped up their activities against opposition parties, unions, and popular groups—as spectacularly demonstrated by the October 30 bombing of the FENASTRAS union offices, killing eleven people. The army, publicly and privately, expressed the view that the FMLN was finished militarily.

The rebels went into the offensive with three levels of expectation. At the very least, they looked to show their ability to make the country ungovernable, to bleed the army, and to strengthen their negotiating hand at the next round of talks. This they achieved, holding parts of the capital much longer than they had hoped and later escaping to their mountain strongholds through government positions ringing the city.

On the second level of expectations, the rebels hoped to create a split within the army and between the army and ARENA, perhaps provoking a coup d'état.

Finally, some FMLN planners hoped that what began as an offensive would develop into a full-fledged insurrection that would topple the government. UCA rector Ignacio Ellacuría, one of the slain Jesuits, was prophetic in his assessment of this. "The FMLN thinks insurrection is possible. They think the population is radical and very militant. They are wrong." Ellacuría judged that the rebels' ongoing tactics of assassinating mayors and of economic sabotage and transportation boycotts had cost them popular support. "Everybody has this idea that an insurrection is a whole people rising up Hollywood-style," Guillermo Ungo told me. "That wasn't true even in Nicaragua. You need twenty families in each neighborhood. My guess is that they had two or three families instead of twenty."

The FMLN, in approaching the coming round of talks with Cristiani and UN Secretary General Pérez de Cuéllar, has dropped its demands for power-sharing prior to an election, for a merging of the two armies, and for a wholesale change in the existing constitution. They have even suggested that the Salvadoran people vote directly on the terms of any negotiation.

The resounding defeat of the Sandinistas by the UNO coalition in Nicaragua must figure heavily in the FMLN's rethinking of revolutionary prospects in the region. The end of Sandinista rule next door may either boost those realpolitik elements within the FMLN who seek a negotiated settlement or may drive more hard-line elements to refuse talks in favor of a long-term project for revolution in the area. The latter would be a serious miscalculation. In otherwise analyzing the "correlation of forces," the rebels are not unaware of the retreat of Soviet power and they realize that in the region as a whole a shift to the right is underway. In 1986, Vinicio Cerezo was a Guatemalan Christian

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Democrat with high hopes. Now his star has faded, "his" military runs the show, and the right is favored to recapture the presidency in upcoming elections. Jose Napoleón Duarte was replaced by the rightist ARENA party. Oscar Arias's Liberation party lost narrowly to conservative Rafael Calderon in Costa Rica. The Honduran Liberals, at least historically more hostile to the military, dropped the recent elections to the Nationalists. Panama...we know.

According to Zamora, two points on which the FMLN will not retreat are the purging of the army of human rights violators and a substantial reduction in the army's numbers; and a guarantee of full political, trade union, and human rights. Segundo Montes, another of the slain Jesuits, once said, tongue-in-cheek, that "Salvador is not a small country with a big army. Rather it is a big army that has a small country." The army can be counted on to circle its wagons and protect its own officers from censure. It can be counted on likewise to resist any diminution in its size, budget, and consequent political power and autonomy.

The fragile democratic political space that permitted the left Democratic Convergence to field Ungo as a presidential candidate in March 1989 is gone. Ungo is in exile, though he plans to return. Rubén Zamora is back in San Salvador, cautiously rebuilding the party network torn asunder during the November offensive. Ungo's second-in-command, Héctor Oqueli, was kidnapped, tortured, and murdered by death squads in Guatemala in January. Trade unions are hampered by the militarization of the situation. Human rights groups are charged by the government as being "fronts" for the guerrillas. Foreign humanitarian workers are, following the expulsion of church worker Jennifer Casolo, under intense pressure to leave or are hampered in doing their work.

"We will not play into the 'bonsai' strategy of the counter-insurgency," argues Ungo. "They want us not to grow—like a bonsai tree—but to simply exist as a beautiful little tree that bears no fruit and decorates the garden of Cristiani and Bush. That way they can say, 'See, we are a democracy. We have a center, a right, and a left.'"

Over the next six months, El Salvador will turn either in the direction of a negotiated political settlement or—absent genuine progress—toward an intensification of the war and further repression. Time will tell whether the Cristiani government and the United States opt for the "let's make a deal" mentality of a growing sector of the business class or yield to the overweening power of the military, most of whom emerged from the FMLN offensive more hardened in their attitudes. Any presumption by the U.S. and the Salvadoran government that the fall of the Sandinistas necessarily means the beginning of the end of the FMLN would be a mistake. The FMLN is a home-grown product, and a relatively self-sufficient one at that. The progress—or lack of same—in prosecuting those arrested in the killing of the Jesuits and in pursuing the responsibility of higher-ups in the military will tell the tale. That will determine whether the deaths of the Jesuits will be, in the words of their Central American provincial, "the seeds of peace with justice in El Salvador" or simply another chapter in an epic of death and injustice that will not end. □

"Were not our hearts burning within us while He spoke to us and opened the scriptures to us?"
—Luke 24:32

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REPARATIONS: ATTENTION MUST BE PAID

HEALING THE BODY POLITIC IN LATIN AMERICA

IGNACIO MARTIN-BARO

One of the thorniest problems that has to be confronted by Latin American states hoping to establish democratic governments is the necessity of dealing with the sequelae of the political repression carried out earlier by governments of "national security." This is a palpably real problem in countries like Argentina and Uruguay, a problem shaping up as critical in the immediate future of Chile, a problem that someday will have to be dealt with in Guatemala and El Salvador, and just beginning in Peru and Colombia. The presumed peaceful transition from dictatorship to democracy, when it is not mediated by a war that establishes democratic forces as the victors, gets into great difficulty when it tries to deal with justice, and even when it takes on the simple matter of working out the past. But to paraphrase an old saying, it is surely the case that people who cannot confront their history are condemned to repeat it.

To this end, an assessment must be made of the magnitude—both quantitative and qualitative—of the damage produced by counterinsurgency campaigns or state repression, for only then can we appreciate the deception involved in wanting to wipe out history and start over. Only by taking a full inventory do we see that the past that would be closed up with such haste is not only alive in persons and groups—victims and victimizers—but operating still, within the same social structures that existed before.

Of course, there is the emptiness left by all those thousands of persons who have been murdered or "disappeared," an emptiness that still grieves and oppresses their families. But there is also the living wound of all of those—probably as many or more than the number who died—who survived by suffering the cruelty visited on their own flesh by cruel prisons, endless interrogations, and refined tortures. Finally, there is the trauma of those countless people who were threatened, harassed, and persecuted, and who, in order to save their lives and those of their loved ones, had to renounce their ideals and principles—or at least hide them—to flee, to seek refuge, and even exile themselves from their own country.

All this damage is of such magnitude that it becomes almost ingenuous or cynical to act as if it can be forgotten overnight, because fundamentally the problem is not one of isolated individuals, whether few or many; it is a problem whose nature is strictly social. The damage that has been produced is not simply in the destruction of personal lives. Harm has been done to the social structures themselves—to the norms that order the common life, to the institutions that govern the life of citizens, to the values and principles by which people are educated and through which the repression has tried to justify itself.

People invoke a variety of arguments to defend the idea that all this damage should be completely forgotten, and those who committed it, unconditionally pardoned. In some cases, the argument of "owed obedience" is called up. Here, a few people of high rank are singled out as being the ones who are solely responsible for the damage, and of course they are always considered as individuals, not as representatives of the state or of the armed forces. The second and most common argument is that of the political necessity of getting beyond the past, so as not to perpetuate the conflict, and this requires pardon and social reconciliation. On occasion, this argument gets wrapped in the cloak of Christian forgiveness, as if this way out were the only one consistent with Christian teachings. Finally, from time to time the argument of "greater might" is tried or insinuated, saying that if pardon and social forgetting are not forthcoming, there is the danger of the military rebelling against the democratic system and bringing back dictatorship. Consequently, as much for social convenience as for political realism, we would have to let go of any thought of laying blame on those who committed offenses in the name of national security, and to quit all claims for reparation for the personal and social damage they have produced.

This is not the place to belabor the historical backwardness of the "owed obedience" argument. Suffice it to say that the Nuremberg judgments lose all validity, turning into a simple vengeance on the part of the victors, should their ethical, legal, and social logic be "inapplicable" under present circumstances. In this sense, the famous case of Lt. William Calley, one of the people responsible for the massacre at My Lai, already constitutes a bad precedent.

IGNACIO MARTIN-BARO, S.J., *among the six Jesuits murdered in El Salvador on November 16, 1989, wrote this essay shortly before his death as the prologue for a book on mental health and human rights,* Todo es Según el Dolor con que se Mira (*Pain Is in the Eye of the Beholder*), *published by ILAS, Santiago, Chile, 1989, and edited by Elizabeth Lira. The translation is by Adrianne Aron, a clinical psychologist who works with the Committee for Health Rights in Central America, one of the sponsors of Martín-Baró's work.*

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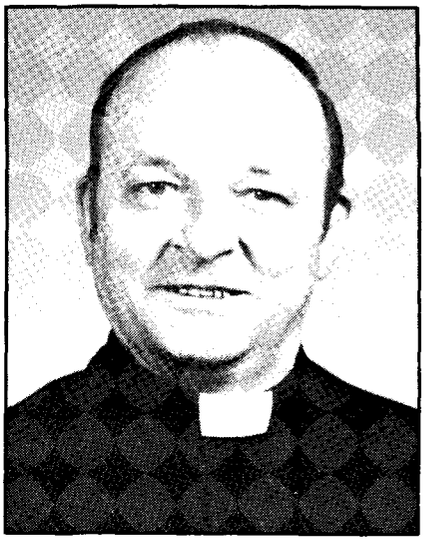

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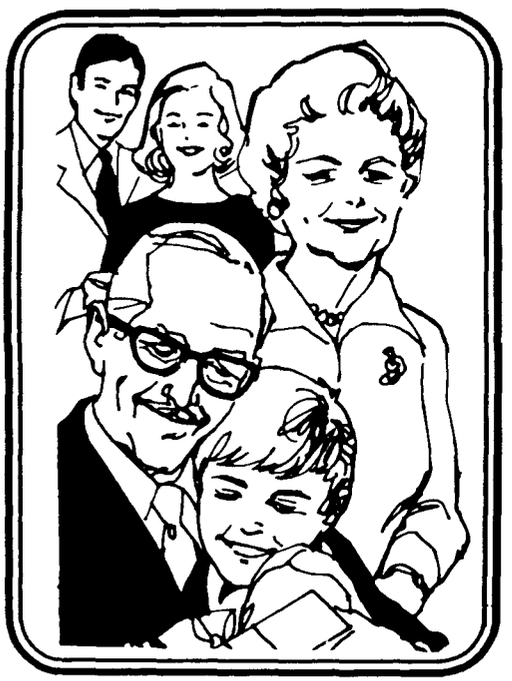

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The second argument is without doubt the strongest, and must be granted a measure of validity. There is no doubt that the evolution of human society requires the capacity to overcome differences, to pardon offenses, and even renounce certain well-founded claims in the interest of peace and the common good. Nevertheless, the problem turns on whether that pardon and renunciation are going to be established on a foundation of truth and justice, or on lies and continued injustice. It is clear that nobody is going to return to the imprisoned dissident his youth; to the young woman who has been raped her innocence; to the person who has been tortured his or her integrity. Nobody is going to return the dead and the disappeared to their families. What can and must be publicly restored is the victims' names and their dignity, through a formal recognition of the injustice of what has occurred, and, wherever possible, material reparation. As for the "disappeared," restitution must be made by a full disclosure of what happened, and if possible, a return of the mortal remains of the victim—or of the person himself or herself, in the case of those children who were stolen from their families. Christianity calls for pardon, yes, but a pardon based on truth and justice. Even the most traditional morality only speaks of reconciliation when joined with the "offer of compensation"; that is, the recognition of wrong committed, and of "atonement through acts," which is to say, reparation.

The third argument—of "greater might"—is unfortunately the one with the most political weight, although it is also the most fragile. Because, at bottom, what it is recognizing is the falsely democratic character of a social order mortgaged to the power of the military and subject to its will. A democracy that respects the argument of "greater might" will always be under the sword of Damocles, wielded by those who through their control of violence can decide on the acceptability of a legal act or a political orientation, according to their group, or even personal, interests. Such a democracy will always be constrained, censored, castrated—contradicting from its very roots its own nature and vocation. Further, this argument represents an offensive perversion of the military institution itself, for it presupposes that the military could never be wed to justice or function honestly; in other words, it writes off the possibility that the armed forces would be capable of facing up to and accepting the same principle of justice that would apply to any other person, group, or social institution. Do we really believe that this principle can lead to the establishment of a truly democratic society? Would it not be selling as an historical possibility for democracy something that constitutes precisely a condition of its impossibility?

Those who clamor for social reparation are not asking for vengeance. Nor are they blindly adding difficulties to a historical process that is already by no means easy. On the contrary, they are promoting the personal and social viability of a new society, truly democratic. What it comes down to is, how can justice be exercised in our societies if the people who are the principal violators of human rights can freely flaunt before their own victims the idea that what they did was "the right thing," something they might even have to do again? What right would we have to punish or imprison someone who steals another's goods or who kills out of personal motives, if we ignore the damage done by those who stole human lives and committed mass assassination out of ideological zeal?

Just as personal traumas require therapy so that they can be worked through and overcome, our Latin American societies require the sociopolitical therapy of a just reparation for the genocide committed in the name of national security, and indeed, of Western civilization. □

Nikia Leopold

Escarpment from Water

Here the land-scent sweetens salt
With waves of
Beachplums and succulents.
From the lapping water
A dazzle of seagrape
Leaves and sun
On the ridge.

The reef becomes
A face of mouths
Urged in tufa
By insistent whispers of the sea.
Ceaseless catechism has made
The rock eccentric,
Its porous surface
A wilderness for hermits
Bearing borrowed shells.
In alcoves urchins meditate
Upon the blackness
Of their spikes.

The waves rise, and in recession
All the rock mouths
Iridescent echoes.
Behind the bubbles, raw orange, aqua—
Algae, refreshed
By the tidal question.

I face a niche
Breathe
With waves and beachplums
Bob in the glitter
Of salt and seagrapes

Tread water
As long as I can.

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VIETNAM ACCORDING TO OLIVER STONE

JOHN WAYNE RIDES AGAIN

CHRISTIAN APPY

If Oliver Stone is on hand to direct the Second Coming, don't expect a grainy documentary. The face of the Lord will be made to shine down upon us—in super tight focus—and the throbbing violin swells of a John Williams score will roll in from the sun-streaked horizon. These lofty cinematic gestures will be there to remind us that we are in the presence of a very important story, the ultimate epic.

Stone's current epic is *Born on the Fourth of July,* starring Tom Cruise as Ron Kovic, a former Marine sergeant who was paralyzed from the chest down in a 1968 firefight during his second tour of duty in the Vietnam War. Stone traces Kovic's life from 1956 to 1976, from a childhood war game in Massapequa, New York, to his nearly fatal wound in Vietnam (while waiting for surgery, Kovic received the last rites); from a "Moon River" kiss on prom night to a Cua Viet river hamlet where his squad slaughtered a houseful of women and children; from flat on his back in a schoolboy wrestling match to full body traction in a rat-infested VA hospital; from bitter rage at his unmanning to righteous bravado as a leader of antiwar veterans; from "Love it or leave it" to "No more bombing, no more war."

This is Stone's third encounter with Vietnam. In the first, Stone shot real bullets with the 25th Infantry Division. The second was *Platoon,* the 1986 film hailed by *Time* magazine as the first Hollywood production to show Vietnam "the way it really was." Finally, it seemed, we had an insider's view of the war by a filmmaker we could trust to be authentic. No more improbable games of Russian roulette (*The Deer Hunter*) or crazy colonels up the heart-of-darkness river (*Apocalypse Now*). The real war was insane enough.

In one crucial respect, however, Stone's approach to Vietnam is like that of the earlier movies directed by Michael Cimino and Francis Ford Coppola. He, too, cannot resist grandiloquence. Individual pieces may seem on the mark—"the way it really was"—but Stone is constantly basting them with a mythic sauce. And so what comes out this time is not a searching examination of Ron Kovic's life, but a symbolic life, the effort to make Kovic's experience represent the history of an entire nation.

What's wrong with this? After all, the Vietnam War surely qualifies as epic history. For thirty years the United Stated tried to crush revolutionary nationalism in Vietnam, first by supporting the French reconquest of Indochina in 1946, then by fighting what the generals now call "low-intensity warfare" (using natives to do the fighting), and finally with full-scale military intervention. Three million Americans were sent to fight our longest war. Sixty thousand were killed, and thousands more, like Kovic, were permanently wounded. In Vietnam the suffering was far more widespread. The United States dropped three times more bombs on Vietnam than were dropped by all sides in World War II. Most of those bombs were used on *South* Vietnam, the region we were ostensibly defending from Communist "aggression." Two million Vietnamese were killed out of a population of 35 million.

No wonder so many filmmakers pump up Vietnam stories. Perhaps they assume (wrongly I think) that a modest movie cannot do justice to the war's enormity (or won't sell). The problem, though, is not that Stone is overly ambitious. The problem is that his "epic" turns out to be so predictable, and that what it teaches us about the war is so scant. *Fourth of July* is often shocking, but rarely surprising; it is moving, but does not move us to think about its subject in a new or especially useful way. Its emotional power gives us the illusion of understanding what we have hardly begun to explore.

We should expect more from the growing body of Vietnam films. Yet the long-delayed appearance of *Fourth of July* serves to remind us of how long it took Hollywood to tell *any* stories about Vietnam. From 1961 to 1973, the key years of American fighting in Vietnam, Hollywood produced only one movie explicitly about the war—*The Green Berets* (1968). Starring John Wayne, this prowar polemic was so hackneyed and tedious it invariably brought howls of unintended laughter from both war critics at home and American soldiers who were treated to it while stationed in Vietnam.

In 1976, Kovic published his autobiography, *Born on the Fourth of July.* "SOON TO BE AN IMPORTANT MOTION PICTURE!" is stamped on the 1977 paperback. That year brought the first trickle of Vietnam films. But Hollywood considered Kovic's story a bad financial risk and would not back it. Ironically, *Coming Home* appeared a year later and won three Academy Awards. Starring John Voight and Jane Fonda, it too portrayed a paraplegic veteran who turned against the war.

CHRISTIAN APPY *teaches history and literature at Harvard. He is completing a book about American soldiers in the Vietnam War.*

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Stone, who eventually acquired the film rights, promised Kovic he would make *Fourth of July* once he got established in the business. Hollywood's biggest male draw signed on and, as Stone described it to Larry King, the "Vietnam market" is still hot. And despite the antiwar veneer, the movie is decidedly free of truly controversial material. The questions it is most likely to elicit do not concern the injustices of the war. Instead, you hear things like: Were most recruits so innocent? (No.) Were conditions in VA hospitals so appalling? (Yes, see Paul Starr's *The Discarded Army.*) Did veterans really go to a brothel in Mexico? (Some did.)

Fourth of July, which has been nominated for eight Academy Awards, opens with a "morning in America" sequence that is every bit as sentimental as Reagan's 1984 campaign commercial. This nostalgic Americana is there to explain why Ron Kovic was such a gung-ho and naive volunteer. Stone rounds up the usual suspects—childhood war games, ritualized patriotism, cold-war anticommunism, Kennedy's famous call for national service, a Vince Lombardi coach, and slick Marine recruiters.

This portrait explains little. Most boys of that generation grew up liking John Wayne, trusting Kennedy, and loving their country. Yet fewer than half entered the military and only 12 percent went to Vietnam. The vast majority who did go were poor and working class. Stone's snapshots of Massapequa evoke a virtually homogeneous middle-class world. He gives us only the slightest hint that the Kovics were raising a large family on the wages of a supermarket clerk.

Kovic's book makes clear that, whatever else attracted him, he viewed the Marines as a possible way out of the onerous work world of his father: "I didn't want to be like [my dad], working in that stinking A&P, six days a week, twelve hours a day. I wanted to be somebody." The film turns this issue into a flip one-liner.

Most of the working-class kids sent to Vietnam were drawn into the military not because they wanted to go to war, or even because they believed the military would bring social advancement and honor. They simply regarded it as an unavoidable duty. A military study found that the highest portion of "volunteers" joined primarily because they believed they would soon be drafted and felt they might have more options if they enlisted. College, and the draft deferment that went with it, was not an option in many working-class families.

The adolescent Kovic seems blissfully unaware of human evil and hardship. Yet if you interviewed a typical squad of Marine grunts on their way to Vietnam, you could hardly find a group of young people who had witnessed more of the grimmer actualities of American life—its poverty, racism, and violence. As one veteran put it, in his vastly understated way, "I learned a lot of reality before I even got to Nam." The really striking point is not that Vietnam disillusioned the innocent; but that it destroyed many of America's most streetwise and resilient.

Fourth of July's greatest strength lies in its lengthy segments inside the Bronx Veterans Hospital. The inhuman conditions and dreadful lack of attention are most believable when Stone resists suggesting that all its employees were monsters. Yet, as important as this exposé is, the greater scandal is the Veterans Administration's woeful failure to provide adequate psychological counseling to Vietnam veterans. Until 1979, the VA did not even acknowledge the *existence* of post-traumatic stress syndrome, a condition (the VA later conceded) that has afflicted some five-hundred thousand veterans. The long list of symptoms—chronic depression, rage, guilt, self-doubt, sleeplessness, nightmares, social detachment—were typically treated with drugs alone. Psychiatric help has improved somewhat, but the best programs still have long waiting lists. No one knows precisely how many Vietnam veterans have committed suicide, but some experts believe the number is at least as great as the sixty thousand who died in the war.

The film shows psychological instability, but doesn't explore it. Kovic apparently recovered his sanity through political activism. That's plausible enough. The psychiatrist Robert Jay Lifton studied members of Vietnam Veterans Against the War and found that their political activism was indeed effective in healing psychological trauma (*Home from the War*). But we don't know how Kovic made that recovery because the film does not explain his political conversion.

So why did Kovic turn against the war? Was it because the *American* mission in Vietnam made the killing of civilians routine and inevitable? If so, the film does not quite make that point. The atrocity scene in the film, horrific as it is, closes with an NVA attack that gives at least some retroactive credence to the lieutenant's lame justification of the civilian deaths: "They got in the way." In Kovic's memoir, the NVA attack is a completely separate event. When the Marines fired on the village they never received any hostile fire. By collapsing the two events, the Stone/Kovic screenplay evades a reality that would, in fact, have made Kovic's radicalization more understandable.

One might also attribute Kovic's political change to the guilt he felt for accidentally killing one of his own men. Only after confessing to the dead man's parents does Kovic cast his self-blame against the government. Yet that's a psychological shift more than a political one. And if this confession actually occurred, Kovic does not mention it in his book. In fact, he candidly reports that he tried to free himself of the guilt, not by confessing, but by imagining that his Georgia victim was a racist.

Perhaps Kovic was converted by the college-based antiwar movement? Hardly. You get the feeling that Stone does his best not to ridicule campus activism. But he can't help it. The recipient of Kovic's prom night kiss (Kyra Sedgwick) has gone off to Syracuse to become a leader of the May 1970 student strike. She explains to Kovic that the war is "*so* wrong," but his silence invites us to wonder about her credentials for making such a statement. The film implies that only those who fought the war can legitimately fight against it. One sign of that attitude is the casting of Abbie Hoffman as a cheerleader to the Syracuse demonstrators. Stone would never dream of using a forty-five-year-old man to play a grunt in Vietnam. But an absurd cameo is fine for the movement back home. So much for verisimilitude.

The film's nagging implication is that the real motive behind Kovic's antiwar activities is the desire to recover his manhood;

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that he found in this crusade an outlet for the heroic self-expression he had been looking for his whole life. In his book, Kovic writes: "I honestly believed that if only I could speak out to enough people I could stop the war myself." This view does not do justice to the collective efforts of the VVAW—the most significant antiwar veterans' movement in our history.

At the end of the film, Kovic regains the pride of the warrior. After making a guerrilla raid on the 1972 Republican Convention in Miami, he and his comrades are evicted, beaten, and tear-gassed. In fact, the cops did not abuse the veterans. But that fiction allows Stone the opportunity for a shameless repetition of Kovic's battlefield rescue by an anonymous black soldier. Once rescued, Kovic revives his squad leader lingo to rally his troops ("Listen up!"), and leads another charge on the hall. Some have said that if the Vietnam experience did nothing else, it would at least undermine the worst ideals of masculinity represented by John Wayne. Judging by this film, the Duke is still in the saddle. □

MEDIA

THE TRIALS OF TELEVISION

THE McMARTIN CASE

In America in January 1990, the words *in fact* have very little, or a very specialized, meaning. Here in California, the McMartin Preschool trial is over. It's on all the networks, all the local news. Two-and-a-half years, $15 million court costs, and the last two defendants out of the original seven have been found not guilty of scores of charges of child molestation, satanism, animal sacrifice, and enforced child pornography. Peggy McMartin Buckey and her son Raymond Buckey—who has done five years in jail during this trial—are on the street. Sort of.

Driving away from the courthouse, Peggy signals for her chauffeur to stop and gives a brief, wimpy interview—she wasn't raised to be bitter, she says, despite the fact that her life, her livelihood, and her reputation have been irreversibly savaged—and drives on. But the TV is more interested in the reactions of the parents of the supposedly abused kids, and of the kids themselves, now seven years older than their alleged fondling, and of the L.A. County prosecutors, the only certain guilty parties in the whole case. Out of sheer careerism, the DAs turned the case into an overlong, overpriced, and badly staged goon show.

Everybody is bitter. The parents and the kids—who may or may not have been coached to lie—are hurt and outraged that the jury didn't believe them. The DA's people angrily holler "mistrial" and, before the cameras, label Peggy and Ray with the guilt they couldn't label them with in court. Early on they had leaked details to the press that Stephen King, for crying out loud, would have trouble making believable. They spent the next two years swallowing cold crow because nobody, it appears, in Manhattan Beach, California, knows the rules of evidence.

Curiouser and curiouser, as Alice said, or as you might say—and probably did—watching all this unfold. Why all this bother *now*? The kids were fondled and raped or they were not. The defendants are either unholy monsters or they are not. The prosecutors—you can always identify the fools in a classical drama—have made it impossible, at the cost of several Stealth bombers, to decide what, if anything, happened—or whom it happened to, or why or when or by whom. After a fiasco like *that*, you want to ask, why doesn't everybody just go home.

Well, you know, because the cameras are rolling. (Someone once asked T.E. Lawrence, "Why do men go to war?" And his profound reply was, "Because the women are watching.") And there are *other* people to interview: now the members of the jury can actually be on TV, and then we can interview defendants in child-molestation cases from the Midwest, and....

It's all so damned telegenic. Vietnam, we've all heard and accepted by now, was the first TV War. And bringing the War into America's living rooms—showing, nightly, its obscenity—was a major factor in making the war unpopular. If that is so, then the McMartin Trial is the first TV Trial, but in a very different sense. In the first instance, the Tube brought a brutal reality *into* the American consciousness, and in doing so helped change that consciousness. But in this instance, the Tube—the whole baroque mechanism of information-gathering and dissemination intruded upon the *reality* of the alleged crimes and, let's face it, shaped that *reality*. Shaped it to the requirements of a consciousness already formed by the breathless sensationalism of Geraldo, Oprah, and Phil. In doing so, it made it virtually impossible to discover the "facts" of the case. Finally there *were* no facts, only images: well-groomed reporters detailing, with straight faces, allegations (leaked by—*somebody*) of satan-worship, cannibalism, and necrophilia performed in broad daylight in a preschool in one of the fashionable neighborhoods of L.A. This may be a measure of how much, in the last twenty years, TV itself has come to be the central reality of our lives. That good and gifted man, Marshall McLuhan, predicted in the sixties that TV could transform the world into the brotherhood of a "global village." But who could have thought that the name of the village would turn out to be Salem?

Remember how hard it was to find unprejudiced jurors for the trial of Oliver North? Only those who *had not seen* TV reports on North's Senate hearings qualified as "unprejudiced." Saints, hermits, or liars, in other words. And is this a jury of North's "peers"? Or, put another way, does invincible ignorance of the most powerful public information system ever devised *qualify* you for one of the most weighty duties of citizenship?

We are, I think, at a fairly serious impasse, and one that not even our best science-fiction writers predicted. The point is that our judicial system, dating at least from the consolidation of English Common Law in the sixteenth century, and our electoral system, dating from the eighteenth, are both near-perfect mechanisms designed for people moving at normal speed. But the speed of light is *not* normal speed, and that is the speed at which information now moves, and information, in any society, is action.

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Our technology has outstripped—by 186,000 miles per second, as a matter of fact—our ethics, and even our laboriously constructed ethical systems. Two days after George Bush invaded Panama, *U.S.A. Today*—a newspaper that *wants* to be a TV show—carried, on its cover, not news of the invasion, but the results of a poll as to how many Panamanians approved of the invasion.

To say that all this is simply awful would be as silly as for an ancient Babylonian to mourn the invention of writing. The technology is *here*, and technology is never reversible. But we can ask questions. After two presidents who rely on opinion polls and ratings more than on the art of government, will we finally revise our electoral and judicial process into decision-by-telethon?

But I am not a science-fiction writer, so I don't pursue such questions. I am a mystery writer, so I want to ask who—after the McMartin staff, parents, and children—might be the next victims?

FRANK McCONNELL

Frank McConnell is a member of the English Department at the University of California at Santa Barbara.

STAGE

INNOCENCE & RUTHLESSNESS

'SOME AMERICANS ABROAD'

In 1986, Theatre Communications Group published *Strictly Dishonorable and Other Lost American Plays*, four works "selected and introduced by" Richard Nelson. Nelson found that the plays from the 1920s and 1930s—comedies and dramas alike—bore a family resemblance despite their surface differences. What made them American, he decided, was the "something unique to the American character that allows profound innocence and cold ruthlessness to inhabit the same being." With a little manipulation, the phrase could be use to define the characters in Nelson's own new play, *Some Americans Abroad*, at the Newhouse at Lincoln Center. Since the play is a product of the late 1980s (it was commissioned and presented by the Royal Shakespeare Company in 1989), both the innocence and the ruthlessness wear veils of obfuscating words.

The Americans abroad in Nelson's comedy are a group of professors leading a summer theater study tour. When we first meet them, they are at a table where Joe Taylor, the head of the English department, is holding forth on the inefficacy of political demonstrations, interrupted only by Philip Brown, his colleague, friend, and perennial verbal antagonist. They segue into an argument over the contemporary relevance of Bernard Shaw. As Joe—played with scary accuracy by Colin Stinton—weaves an analysis of Major Barbara, timid Henry McNeil squeaks amiably that the play is on the syllabus for Joe's course, isn't it? Henry is played by Bob Balaban, who was Jules Feiffer's Anthony Rose earlier this season in Philadelphia. It seems at first that Henry—an outsider in this Ivy-covered company—may be a soft-spoken individual, like the Feiffer character, whose quiet sentences are deadly. But Nelson has something else in mind for poor Henry. Neither Joe nor Philip can be deflated, so the rhetoric rolls on.

Nelson's professors are anglophiles, determined not to be innocents abroad. They work to dissociate themselves from the American tourists who flood England in the summer, although they necessarily frequent the theaters, the bookstores, and the restaurants where American visitors gather. The obvious comedy in *Some Americans Abroad* lies here. Their knowing ineptness can be funny, although Nelson purposely overstates their acquired Englishness; no professor of English literature and certainly no Englishman would stand on Westminster Bridge in the rain and sing "God Save the Queen" after reciting the appropriate Wordsworth sonnet. That they are strangers abroad is obvious, a condition that has its dark side. The Baldwins, the former department chairman and his wife, who have retired to East Sussex to be near Henry James's Lamb House, have not found paradise, as his drinking indicates, and the former student who has arranged the theater tickets for the group yearns to be part of them since she is clearly not at home in her English husband's world.

Nelson has a good ear for the pretentious platitude that skewers the speaker, but his play has more serious work to do than to guy Americans abroad. There are two plots at work beneath his travelogue. The McNeils are on the trip, at their own expense, because Henry, who has already been fired and does not know it, hopes to ingratiate himself with Joe and hang onto his temporary appointment. A hysterical student accuses Philip of abusing her—touching her breast—and Joe, protecting himself, consults Baldwin, the dean back home, and almost everyone but Philip. Joe's ruthlessness lies in what he does not do—his inability to face any kind of crisis directly. He is blind to the consequences of his inaction, just as he is unaware of matters (Philip's affair with a married colleague) and reactions (his daughter's distress) not on a syllabus. In the final scene, another dinner, Joe retreats, haltingly, onto the safe ground of words. Here, *Some Americans Abroad*, a lightweight show, reveals its kinship to Nelson's much more serious *Principia Scriptoriae*. In that work, the ugliest realities lack force until they are given literary expression; in *Some Americans Abroad*, potentially ugly realities are hidden behind the flow of words, literary ideas as a sound baffle. Profoundly innocent and coldly ruthless? Perhaps not, but close enough to evoke Nelson's description of his lost plays.

GERALD WEALES

A GRATEFUL GOOD-BY Tom O'Brien's first movie review appeared in these pages on February 10, 1984; there followed five years of steady, careful, and incisive comment not just about the silver screen, but about the larger culture and its cinematic expression. Tom has been a valued collaborator. Now he is moving on to new projects in Washington, D.C. We look forward to his continued presence as book reviewer and essayist.

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Liberation theology: lessons & limits

LIBERATION THEOLOGY AT THE CROSSROADS
Paul E. Sigmund
Oxford University Press, $29.95, 272 pp.

Robert E. White

During the nineteenth century, as Europe was undergoing a series of economic and political revolutions, the church aligned itself unambiguously on the side of elitism and authority. Revolutionary leaders in the struggle to overthrow the old order regarded the church as a pillar of reactionary thought. Catholic theologians who tried to move toward resolving the conflict between democratic nationalism and Catholic doctrine were confronted with documents such as Pius IX's Syllabus of Errors, which condemned the proposition that "the Roman Pontiff should reconcile himself with progress, liberalism, and modern civilization."

The history of modern Catholic social thought—beginning with *Rerum novarum* in 1891 down to *Sollicitudo rei socialis* in 1988—traces a delayed, yet largely successful effort to lead the church away from the Ptolemaic design of a single European model for Christian culture and civilization based on religious and secular monarchy, to the Copernican concept of the faith as a leaven in a pluralistic, secular world. Vatican Council II thrust the church forward into a new worldwide role as witness to the values of justice and peace, community and development.

As Catholic thinking on how to organize modern society advanced, some theologians made regrettable forays into calls for social justice midwifed through a corporativism that provided the intellectual justification for Iberian and Latin American fascism. At no time, however, did Rome threaten to sanction priests and theologians who identified the church with authoritarian regimes and anti-Semitic movements.

As the second half of the twentieth century began and the winds of change were sweeping through Latin America, the church found itself inexorably drawn into the rush of ideas and events. Through the Latin American Bishops' Conferences at Medellin in 1968 and Puebla in 1979, the church laid down a "preferential option for the poor." In the words of Paul VI at Medellin: "The poor of Latin America have a right not only to share in the fruits of the society, but also in the direction of that society." Leading the church into these new and only very partially charted waters were the theologians of liberation.

The documents of Medellin and Puebla and the exchanges of letters between John Paul II and the Brazilian bishops represent a continuing process of reconciling Vatican concerns with the theology of liberation. At the centerpiece of this dialogue were the probing and creative works of men such as the Brazilian Franciscan, Leonardo Boff, and the Peruvian priest, Gustavo Gutierrez. According to Boff, the church is "a special institutional articulation of Christianity" which at the same time is "a sinful and pilgrim organization far from the Father's house." The challenge for the church, according to Gutierrez, is no longer from the nonbeliever, but from the nonhuman, that is the man or woman "not recognized as human by the prevailing social order." The key question for the church, Gutierrez believes, is how to bring good news to "a world that is not human and what the implications might be of telling nonhumans that they are children of God."

In this important and timely book, Paul Sigmund does a masterly job of pulling together the various strands of liberation theology, illustrating the historical crosscurrents at work with excellent case studies of the church's witness during the counterrevolution in Chile and the revolutions taking place in Nicaragua and El Salvador. He discusses the influence of Marxist thought and dependency theory and concludes that liberation theologians have experienced "a shift in their thinking from a view of the poor as the social base for the overthrow of capitalism to a concern with their empowerment and participation to make democracy effective."

John Paul II set his qualified seal of approval on liberation theology in *Sollicitudo rei socialis* when he wrote: "A new way of confronting poverty and underdevelopment has spread in some areas of the world, especially in Latin America. This approach makes liberation the fundamental category and the first principle of action. The positive values as well as the deviations and risks of deviations which are damaging to the faith and are connected with this form of theological reflection and method have been appropriately pointed out. The aspiration to freedom from all forms of slavery affecting the individual and society is something noble and legitimate. This is, in fact, the purpose of development, or rather liberation and development, taking into account the intimate connection between the two."

In the chapter of "American Responses to Liberation Theology," Sigmund in his fair and even-handed way permits Michael Novak and other neoconservative critics to demonstrate in their own words that their intent is not to emulate Vatican theologians and seek to understand liberation theology as an evolving, flawed, yet remarkable effort to renew the Latin American church. Instead, the neoconservatives prefer to condemn these thinkers on the grounds of Marxism and dependency theory which, as Sigmund points out, are earlier attachments now largely left behind by most

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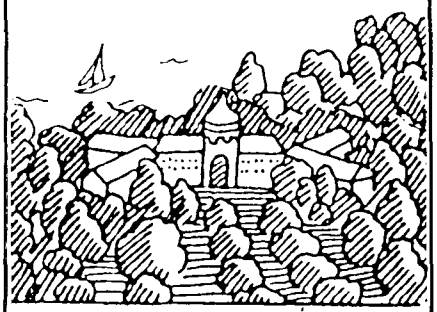

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prominent Latin American theologians.

Neoconservative tirades against liberation theology usually stem from their total commitment to the market economy as the solution for the economic ills of the developing world as well as their almost total lack of knowledge of the Latin American reality. Novak, for example, is quoted as naively suggesting that liberation theologians, instead of flirting with Marxism, should look to "pluralistic, communitarian, public spirited, dynamic, and inventive liberal society" for a model of genuine liberation. The proper response to that is given by Hugo Assman: "Democratic values are revolutionary values."

Neoconservative critics are on the side of the angels when they attack some of the extremes of dependency theory and Marxism. Yet the political, economic, and ecclesiastical dependency of much of Latin America is an indisputable fact. The history of modern Central America, for example, is in great part a search for spiritual and secular identity. Before a country can become democratic it must first become independent. Before a church can achieve authenticity in the eyes of its people it must first produce its own priests and prophets.

Capitalism has played an important and positive role only in those countries where bankers, industrialists, and manufacturers function under the law. The enlightened capitalism of the United States bears no relation whatsoever to the predatory capitalism that afflicts Guatemala and El Salvador. In these countries, Beverly Hills and Calcutta exist side by side and anyone who seeks to mobilize the people peacefully and lawfully to change the inhuman conditions under which 90 percent of the people suffer is labeled a Communist and risks torture and death at the hands of the security forces.

The Salvadoran military, working hand in glove with powerful elements in the ruling ARENA party, killed liberation theologian Ignacio Ellacuría and his fellow Jesuits not because they were Marxists—they most emphatically were not—but because they stood for that "pluralistic, communitarian, public spirited, dynamic, and inventive liberal society" by which Michael Novak sets such great store. □

EVELYN WAUGH REVISITED

THE BRIDESHEAD GENERATION
Evelyn Waugh and His Friends
Humphrey Carpenter
Houghton Mifflin Company, $27.95, 523 pp.

Arthur J. Moore

It will be twenty-four years this April since Evelyn Waugh died. In that time, two biographies, a volume of letters and excerpts from his diary have appeared as well as a number of literary studies. Of Waugh's own work, the vast majority are in print (twelve of the sixteen novels) and even some of his more ephemeral travel writing and journalism has been collected and reissued. The television dramatization of *Brideshead Revisited* was a huge success both in the U.S. and Britain. In contrast with the fate of many authors, whose work suffers at least temporary eclipse after their death, Waugh seems to be more popular now than in the last years of his life.

This popularity does present problems for a biographer who must find some new approach to justify yet another book on his subject. Humphrey Carpenter, an English writer who has written biographies of W.H. Auden, Ezra Pound, and J.R.R. Tolkien, here undertakes what he calls "a study of several writers and their circle, whose work has certain ideas and beliefs in common, and who...are better understood when they are considered in relation to each other." These writers, in addition to Waugh, include Harold Acton, John Betjeman, Cyril Connolly, Graham Greene, Henry Green, Brian Howard, Nancy Mitford, and Anthony Powell. A glittering array, that, and any book which casts new

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Whether a resurgence of political conservatism on a popular scale, accompanied by a return to traditional values in the arts and British social life, would seriously have pleased him must, however, be gravely open to doubt.... "An artist must be reactionary," he told an interviewer four years before his death, using that word not in the sense of "conservative," but (as he always used words) with its precise and literal meaning. "He has to stand out against the tenor of the age and not go flopping along."

—Humphrey Carpenter
The Brideshead Generation

light on these people would indeed be worth reading.

The last book which attempted anything this ambitious was Martin Green's *Children of the Sun*, which also dealt with much the same cast of characters. Mr. Green's book, although lively and provocative, had a ponderous intellectual superstructure of "dandies," "uncles," and "rogues" which soon swamped the whole enterprise. By comparison, Mr. Carpenter is sobriety itself. After the by now obligatory look at Harold Acton and Brian Howard at Eton and Oxford, the book settles down to a fairly straightforward biography of Waugh with a few side glimpses of the other figures.

This approach has its virtues. The whole question of Waugh's homosexuality while at Oxford is set in a context which demystifies it. It is difficult for most Americans, lacking the tradition of all-male schools from an early age on through the university, to quite fathom the tradition of upper-class homosexuality which was very prevalent in English life up until World War II. Carpenter quotes with evident approval the statement by Cyril Connolly that the typical upper-class English male is "adolescent, school-minded, self-conscious, cowardly, sentimental, and in the last analysis homosexual."

Carpenter is also good in his discussion of Waugh's literary influences and in his analysis of Waugh's work. While some of the influences he cites, such as Ronald Firbank and P.G. Wodehouse, are generally accepted, others, such as Hemingway and the use of cinematic techniques, are less well known. He makes a great deal of Lewis Carroll and *Alice in Wonderland* in connection with the early novels such as *Decline and Fall*. The discussion of the later novels (for example, *The Loved One*), is less successful, relying a lot on the critical reception at the time of publication.

Waugh's decision to become a Roman Catholic (Waugh himself said that "Conversion suggests an event more sudden and emotional than his calm acceptance of the propositions of his faith") is treated at length but in a somewhat gingerly fashion. It is not entirely clear how much Carpenter regards this as reflecting Waugh's expressed views of the breakdown of society or more directly a reflection of Waugh's psychic wounds after his first wife left him for another man.

As Waugh more and more accepted the persona of a "Catholic" writer, his religion clearly became more and more identified with his rejection of the contemporary English scene and middle-class values. Increasingly, he began to act as a recruiting agent for his church and as an ideological policeman. Carpenter refers to Waugh's successful campaign to "bring over" Penelope Betjeman and his campaign of harassment of her husband, John, to follow her example. This did not succeed but may have caused a rift between the couple. He does not mention a truly horrifying letter that Waugh wrote Clarissa Churchill when she married Anthony Eden, a divorced man. Graham Greene and Waugh's friendship took place when they were both mature but Waugh made no secret to Greene of his increasing unhappiness at what he regarded as Greene's growing apostasy.

This points to the central problem faced by any Waugh biographer—how to account for Waugh's increasingly difficult personality as he grew older so that in later years he often seemed a caricature. Carpenter regards this as a persona which Waugh adopted and into which he was increasingly frozen by his rejection of the

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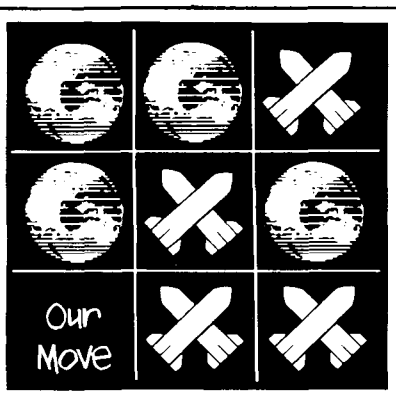
role of an artist. Others, more psychologically oriented, see the denial of his sexually ambiguous nature taking its revenge. Yet others, more unsympathetic, simply see a snob and social climber who was trapped in the British class system. One must also wonder how much his prodigious consumption of alcohol and sleeping medicines was not a cause as well as a symptom of his decline.

Waugh himself anatomized much of this in *The Ordeal of Gilbert Pinfold*, the thinly-novelized account of his delusions and breakdown while on a trip to Ceylon. In any case, from the age of fifty he began to behave as an old man. In social terms, this corresponds with the postwar changes in Britain and the rise of the Labor party. Distasteful as this was to Waugh, it was nothing to the disgust he felt for the changes in the church culminating in Vatican II. Changes in the liturgy particularly offended him—"Pray God I will never apostatize but I can only now go to church as an act of duty and obedience." He died in 1966 at the age of sixty-three.

All of this would be only a sad case, were it not for the novels, which remain glorious. To Waugh admirers, it is unfortunate that *Brideshead Revisited* receives so much attention since it exhibits many of his flaws and keeps readers from the other books. Graham Greene was not being conventionally polite when he called Waugh "the greatest novelist of my generation." That is no mean tribute: that generation included not only Greene himself but also Anthony Powell and Henry Green.

Carpenter's book, unfortunately, does not really convince the reader that this is so and despite his claims at the beginning, the other writers simply fade into the background. It is almost impossible to write a dull book about these people, but between their own writings and other studies, this group of writers is in danger of being too much written about—the fate of Bloomsbury and the American expatriate writers in Paris in the twenties. Perhaps we are in that period when it is best to let their own writings speak for them. □



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'PILGRIMAGE TOWARD OUR HUMANITY'

THE UNDESERVING POOR
From the War on Poverty to the War on Welfare
Michael B. Katz
Pantheon Books, $22.95, 320 pp.

Kenneth P. Jameson

In early 1981 a newly appointed Reagan administration official complained to the press about the homeless men living on the avenues around his agency and suggested they should be removed to save Washingtonians such an unpleasant spectacle. Ironically the same official was a primary spokesman three years later during a major increase in U.S. famine relief for Ethiopia.

U.S. attitudes and social policy toward poverty are ambivalent, if not schizophrenic. We have a generosity of spirit, a willingness to share society's and our own resources with those the Fates scorn, the "deserving poor for whom we accept a social obligation." However, we let the Furies be loosed in vengeance on those whose poverty we believe is of their own making or who dare take advantage of our good will.

Michael B. Katz provides a careful and convincing social history of contemporary U.S. attitudes, debates, and policy toward poverty. He weaves together threads of political, moral, and social philosophy, social science analysis, and empirical investigation into a tapestry which is a worthy complement to the larger historical perspective provided in Gertrude Himmelfarb's *The Idea of Poverty*. The book reinforces the late Michael Harrington's view that our ability to deal with poverty measures progress in the "pilgrimage toward our humanity."

The framework Katz employs is a chronology of the debates over poverty and policy, starting with the 1960s and Oscar Lewis's sympathetic depiction of the culture of poverty. Lewis was rejected by radical champions of the poor and of civil rights. Their own influence, however, was fleeting because their analysis, according to Katz, was not well-based empirically and was inadequately presented in the literature. These are curious reasons; a more plausible explanation is that their analysis was a threat to the system.

The poverty field was left to liberal policy makers and the War on Poverty. The latter was doomed to failure because it lacked resources and was based on a naive perspective on poverty, one motivated by noblesse oblige, the obligation of the elite to help the poor. Even worse, economists took over the War on Poverty because of federal funding mechanisms. Despite real accomplishments (Head Start, the depauperization of the elderly), too much was promised; and the expansion of benefits reinforced the distinction between social insurance and public assistance, creating

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the incorrect perception that public assistance to the "undeserving poor" was growing unjustifiably and dramatically.

This provided an opening for a conservative reaction which initially attacked the War on Poverty (Martin Anderson), then blamed social policy for poverty while at the same time extolling inequality (George Gilder and Charles Murray), and finally emphasized the social obligations of the poor—the poor must be induced to contribute to society (Lawrence Mead). Katz writes of this latest phase, embodied in the recently enacted workfare legislation: "The harder one pushes, the more Mead's concept of social obligation collapses into a new strategy for preserving a pool of cheap, docile labor. As such it is a euphemism. For without mutuality, obligation becomes coercion."

Several key themes emerge from Katz's historical treatment. Liberals take poverty seriously and have a better grasp of its complexities than conservatives, who deal in stereotypes and show a cavalier disregard for empirical evidence. However, the failure of liberal policies based on noblesse oblige and the role of enlightened leadership leave the field open to conservatives who assume minimal social responsibility for dealing with poverty and who sugarcoat it with calls for "a thousand points of light."

Secondly, Katz shows that "poverty" is both a condition and a category, and that the policy debate depends on how both aspects are dealt with and applied. The condition of poverty involves its genesis, manifestations, and characteristics, and the response of the poor to policy steps. The categorization of the poor as those who are deserving or undeserving is even more important and sometimes sinister for its policy ramifications.

In one of the best parts of the book, Katz critiques the currently popular category for the undeserving poor, "the underclass." The simplistic—and misleading—image of family disruption, wanton sexuality (teenage pregnancy), and irresponsibility in work and housing decisions has clearly marked the underclass as undeserving and without claim on society. The "culture of poverty," now amalgamated with Daniel Patrick Moynihan's 1960s' observation on the failure of the black family, has reappeared. But the category is misleading and poorly drawn, an oversimplification of the complexities of the lives of the poor. It says

REVIEWERS

ROBERT E. WHITE, *United States ambassador to El Salvador during the Carter administration, is president of the International Center for Development Policy in Washington, D.C.*

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KENNETH P. JAMESON *is chair of the department of economics at the University of Utah in Salt Lake City.*

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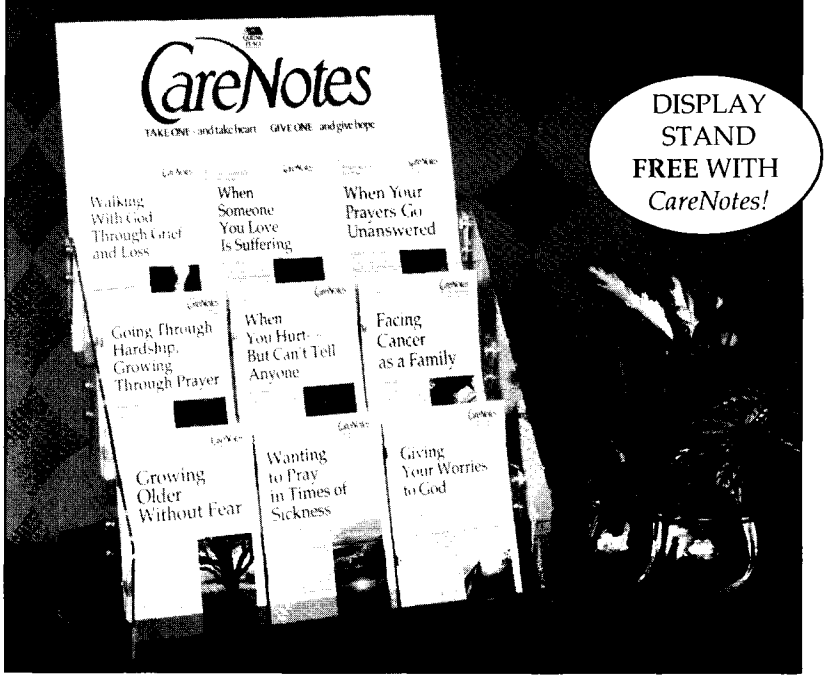
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as much about the categorizers as about the poor.

The book concludes with an attempt to move the debate beyond liberal and conservative conceptions of poverty, in the process showing the difficulties involved. Katz proposes a structural analysis of poverty and suggests that policy modeled on the European experience might be more successful in stopping the pendulum swing between the liberal and conservative extremes. Drawing on the work of William J. Wilson, he shows that the existence of the so-called underclass can be better understood by examining structural problems in the job market.

This effort is essential; however, I am not convinced that Katz's approach can stop the pendulum swing in the understanding and treatment of poverty. What other alternatives are available? The book is quite favorable about the American bishops' *Economic Justice for All*, but never draws upon its insights in formulating a new position. Perhaps the consistent moral and prophetic stance of the bishops can inoculate against the self-delusion that is often present in dealing with poverty. Or perhaps a return to community organization, mobilization of the poor, and direct attack on the structures of society would be more successful than in the 1960s. Perhaps further development of an ethically based understanding of macroeconomics, as proposed by Charles Wilber and me in our new book, *Beyond Reaganomics: A Further Inquiry into the Poverty of Economics*, could provide the structural understanding necessary for creating better policy. Perhaps A. K. Sen's reconceptualization of poverty as an issue of capacities and freedoms would break the confines of the debate.

Whichever direction is taken in this post-conservative era, the late Michael Harrington's words continue to ring true: "When we join, in solidarity and not in noblesse oblige, with the poor, we will rediscover our own best selves...we will regain the vision of America." If we fail in this, we will suffer the fate of the Buendías in García Márquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, "...races condemned to one hundred years of solitude [do] not have a second opportunity on earth." □

CORRESPONDENCE

(Continued from page 170)

Commonweal concludes the August editorial with a call to women, arising from the feminist insight, to exercise restraint in relationships with men who will not or cannot share the responsibilities of parenthood, or to become effective users of contraception.

In my State of the State message of this past January, I advocated something similar, without focusing exclusively on women. I enclose that section of my annual message.

● In a November 3 editorial, "The Politics of Evasion," I was named among some politicians who "rather than engaging in that [political and moral] debate, seem to be evading it."

Frankly, I think the charge of evasion against me is unwarranted. But let me answer some of the editorial's criticisms.

First, *Commonweal* was apparently disappointed by an answer I gave to a question about abortion after a speech (not about abortion) in Tucson, Arizona. The editors at your friendly rival, *America* [October 14], were similarly disappointed. Here's what I wrote to them [October 28]:

"As for my own remarks at Tucson, I assure you that they did not represent any change in my long-held position.

"In Tucson, I said I felt presumptuous talking about the terrible, hard judgment women make with regard to abortion. I do. I am very uncomfortable with having to make decisions about abortion. I do think there is an element of the absurd or incongruous in men making laws about something they can never experience—pregnancy. I think every male should feel uncomfortable making such judgments. But we've been doing it for a long time, both in the church and in government. Certainly, I knew that when I chose public life.

"I did not say that, in every circumstance, the judgment should be absolutely the woman's alone. Nor did I say that I am incapable of making decisions regarding abortion, even with the terrible complexities surrounding it in the public realm. I've done it every year I've been governor, and will continue to, based on the principles I set forth at Notre Dame, as long as they are applicable.

"I will continue to accept my responsibility, and to make other decisions that affect the lives of people whose situations I have no direct experience of—the mentally disabled, people dying of cancer, young people addicted to drugs.

"I said in Tucson that here in America—where the law permits women to have abortions and preserves their right not to have abortions—the terrible, hard judgment, which that freedom permits, must be a matter of the woman's conscience.

"Everything I said in Tucson was perfectly consistent with my position as stated in Notre Dame."

Second, *Commonweal* faulted me for joining eight other governors in an amicus brief to the Supreme Court on the case *Turnock* v. *Ragsdale*. At question was an attempt by the State of Illinois to impose on abortion clinics standards that I viewed as unreasonable. Apart from the fundamental issues of federalism and the separation of powers proper to state legislatures and to U.S. Courts that were involved in the case, the standards imposed by Illinois law were equivalent to hospital standards—far more stringent than experience teaches are required for safe patient care. The standards were, in effect, an attempt to do indirectly, by putting clinics out of business, what the law says cannot be done directly. Illinois, in fact, needed reasonable standards like those in effect in New York, which previously had been challenged and upheld in court. And, in fact, the State of Illinois withdrew the case, and settled out of court—for reasonable standards. The *Ragsdale* amicus brief that I joined was in no way an argument for expanding abortion rights. I do not regret nor apologize for being party to it.

Third, in the November editorial *Commonweal* seems to find an inconsistency between my positions on abortion and on the death penalty.

If it were my judgment that theoretically doable legal restrictions on abortion (for example, limitation of medicaid funding) were fair and would engender a greater respect for life in our state, then I would have to be disposed to advocate for such change.

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I say theoretically doable because it remains my judgment that, as I stated in my Notre Dame speech, "the equal protection clause in New York's Constitution has been interpreted by the courts as a standard of fairness that would preclude us from denying only the poor—by a cut-off of funds—the practical use of the constitutional right given by *Roe* v. *Wade*."

Likewise, if it were my judgment that the imposition of a death penalty would save innocent lives and make our state a safer, better place, then I would have to be disposed to acquiesce in the Legislature's judgment.

But in each case, my prudential political judgment, formed by examining all the available evidence, is that these actions would not have such desirable effects. They would more likely, I believe, merely enable us to ignore the root causes of abortion and crime, and soothe our consciences by allowing us to believe we had done everything possible when we had brought the coercive power of the law to bear.

● In December, *Commonweal* published approvingly a letter sent by State Senator John Brandl of Minnesota to his constituents. I too commend Senator Brandl's willingness to state his position and his reasoning publicly. I wish more legislators, at both the state and national levels, whatever their religious persuasions, would follow his lead.

On some points, for example medicaid funding, I might part company with the senator, for reasons already stated. But I'm not sure we're in total disagreement. He writes, without specifying, about favoring "some restrictions" on medicaid funding. In New York we have some restrictions. When in 1988, we expanded medicaid coverage to some people 185 percent above the poverty level, abortion and some other services were, at my insistence, not included among those covered. I might add that it was not a popular decision, and that those, including the Catholic bishops, for whom it assumably was popular, were publicly silent about it.

I am in total agreement with Senator Brandl when he states "the responsibility of a politician...is...to put forward alternatives." I did that, as already mentioned, this past January in my State of the State message [see page 198].

Senator Brandl also points out that "politicians must enact laws governing a myriad of situations and for millions of people holding a great variety of moral views about the appropriateness of the act." That is a sentiment to bear in mind when considering another issue he raises—parental notification/consent, an issue which has not yet been presented to my administration. I see it this way. My instinct as a parent is one broadly shared by parents. I would have wanted to know if a minor daughter of mine had to face the decision, whether to have an abortion or carry a child to term. I believe I would have, without any law mandating it. And I believe further it is possible that in some individual cases such a law might be beneficial, not necessarily as a way of preventing abortions but of helping to provide a minor the support she needs at such a time.

But to write a law for everyone, to consider not just the individual situation but the circumstances of each minor and her family in this state, is a far more complex decision. I will give the most careful attention I'm capable of to any law on this issue the Legislature sends me.

● *Commonweal*'s January 26 editorial, "Strategy Time," mentions Bishop Leo Maher of San Diego, seeming to disapprove of his action, but disappointed that it took the headlines. Bishop Maher, it seems to me, did not advance with that action the cause he espouses. But there's a broader point to be made. I don't think there's any disagreement that the Catholic bishops of this country have done as much as any group to keep abortion from becoming a non-issue, something that does not deserve and demand our attention. For that I believe they deserve our gratitude. We shouldn't and don't expect bishops to be politicians. But I don't think we can exempt them from the demands of prudence in the political arena. When the public perception is that they are not simply exercising their teaching role for Catholics, but trying to influence the outcome of an election, there will be publicity.

Like *Commonweal*, I look forward to the putative guidelines to be issued by a committee of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops on responsibilities of bishops, Catholic citizens and officials in the current public debates. As far as I can determine, the process for drafting this statement will not follow the broadly consultative lines of more general statements such as the pastoral letter on the U.S. economy. That, of course, has advantages and disadvantages. I, for one, will give respectful and careful attention to whatever guidelines, in its proper realm of competence as teacher, the committee might offer.

● The February 9 editorial, "Strategy Time II," mentions among other things the actions of two bishops besides Bishop Maher—Bishop Elden Curtiss of Montana and Bishop Austin Vaughan of New York.

Unfamiliar with all the details of the Montana case, I am reluctant to comment.

I am familiar with the New York case, but in that instance *Commonweal* has already commented more eloquently than I could: "Bishops have a responsibility to teach and even to enforce the moral law; but their office does not confer the power to read souls, or to make apodictic judgments about how a particular moral principle is to be translated into law and public policy." Amen.

The editorial also raises an issue broader and of more consequence than the actions of individual bishops—that is, the moral, not just "Catholic" character of the abortion issue. I have been criticized for making abortion a Catholic issue, especially after my speech at Notre Dame where I spoke at a Catholic university to a Catholic audience about—in part—my beliefs as a Catholic. I think a careful reading of that speech will reveal that I did not make abortion an exclusively Catholic issue. That would certainly be presumptuous and contemptuous of people who hold other beliefs and some who hold no religious belief, but still oppose abortion.

It is, nonetheless, a problem of public perception, and *Commonweal* is right to raise it for public discussion.

I hope the Catholic bishops, especially, will join that discussion. The bishops, as I understand it, base their opposition to abortion not just on proclaimed Catholic teaching but on the broader lessons of natural law, of laws written in the human heart by God, norms accessible and available to all members of the human family. But

(Continued on page 199)

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Following is a portion, slightly condensed, of Governor Mario Cuomo's 1990 "State of the State" address, mentioned in the accompanying letter to the editors.

No one I know—no matter what position she or he takes in the debate over the right to decide when an abortion is appropriate—would deny that the statistics on abortion in our nation are sobering. Each year, approximately 6 million pregnancies occur; more than half of those pregnancies are unplanned; over 1.5 million, or 25 percent of all pregnancies, end in abortion.

Earlier this year, the former Surgeon General, C. Everett Koop, pointed out that "even among groups committed to confirming a woman's right to legal abortion, there was consensus that any abortion represented a failure in some part of society's support systems—individual, family, church, public health, economic, or social."

This continuing failure of society's support systems has produced a phenomenal growth in the trauma, and the tragedy, of abortion.

And it's here that I believe lies some real hope of accomplishing what most people agree is a desirable goal: lessening the number of abortions by helping women to avoid the situation that requires making the difficult decision of whether to terminate a pregnancy.

Perhaps all of us—families, religious and public institutions, voluntary associations—should begin by teaching young men and women better than we do now their responsibility in creating and caring for human life, instead of abdicating that responsibility and letting the popular media and advertising substitute for it the message that sexual exploitation is normal, or even necessary to validate one's maturity. Our adolescent pregnancy prevention programs make a start in that direction.

At the very least, young men and women should hear from us that they are not abnormal because they choose to abstain until another and better time. I think it is a mistake to believe that history has left the alternative of restraint behind, as a sociological anachronism. My budget will provide funds specifically allocated for promoting the value of abstinence for young people.

At the same time, however, we must recognize that not all young people will follow this preferred path—even with our best efforts. All young people who for whatever reason are sexually active, unprepared to take up the responsibilities of parenthood, and terribly at risk of contracting AIDS and other serious illnesses, should be made fully aware of the possible consequences of being sexually active. Responsible sex education that recognizes and respects the different moral values in our society on this sensitive matter is an appropriate part of the public school curriculum....

While we express a particular concern for teenage pregnancy and abortion among teenagers, this is hardly a matter of concern for young people alone. Only 22 percent of the women who had induced abortions in New York State in 1987 were under the age of twenty. With 25 percent of all pregnancies ending in abortion, most of them involving women over twenty years of age, the failure of society's various support systems is clear. This is a legitimate concern of our public health policy.

Some of us believe the use of contraceptives is wrong. Those who do, have a right to live by that belief. That is one of the great beauties of this democratic place; no one can be required to have an abortion or to use contraception. But, for the sake of those people in our society who believe contraception is better than abortion, we should invest in better, easier, and safer contraceptive methods—as freely as we would invest in other technology that might have a bearing on 1.5 million women a year. The new budget I will submit in January will provide funds to enable family planning clinics to offer family planning services to those who wish to use them. Further, in high-risk communities, starting first with Neighborhood-Based-Initiatives sites, we will provide special grants for outreach, expanded clinic hours, and other innovative strategies that will increase the likelihood that young people will make use of these services.

Another aspect of the situation that deserves more attention is the question of adoption. There are some women who would rather not choose abortion if they could be relieved of some or all of the emotional, physical, financial, and social commitments of bringing up children—commitments they judge themselves presently incapable of undertaking for a lifetime.

We need to reexamine this adoption option, not as a panacea for abortion but as another of the ways we can create real choices for people. We should remove unnecessary obstacles to adoption, making it as easy as possible, consistent with prudence, for the thousands of people eager to find a child they can love, to do so. And we must continue to see to it, as we do in New York, that the health care necessary to give birth safely is as available as the care needed to have an abortion.

Finally, everyone, I hope—whatever else they believe—would agree that life beyond the womb deserves more consideration. We should understand that whether or not the law reflects one's view of abortion, no infant should come into a world that does not care if it is fed properly, housed decently, educated adequately; where the blind or retarded child is condemned to exist rather than empowered to live.

While the debate goes on over abortion, the United States' infant mortality rate places us sixteenth among the nations of the world. Thousands of infants die each year because of inadequate medical care. Some are born with birth defects that, with proper treatment, could have been prevented. Some are stunted in their physical and mental growth because of improper nutrition.

All of us, I believe, should support efforts like New York's Decade of the Child, our comprehensive program to help children in every way possible. Together, we need to prove that whatever we believe about when life begins, we surely are fully committed to nurturing, caring, and loving the children left to our charge. □

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(Continued from page 197)

it seems to me that there has been a reluctance on the bishops' part to pressure or criticize non-Catholic politicians whose position on abortion is not theirs. I understand their reluctance. Other Christian denominations and some non-Christian faiths do not teach as the bishops do. Some do.

The reality or concept of the natural law is not one congenial to our society. I don't see much attempt by the bishops to explain, defend, or promote it to Catholics or others. Perhaps, that's a work the bishops could join with others of similar belief—theologians, philosophers, religious leaders—in undertaking. An ecumenical effort to do that might help convince their fellow citizens that what they teach to Catholics would be beneficial for them as well, that their teaching is, as I said at Notre Dame, "not just parochial or narrowly sectarian but fulfills a human desire for order, peace, justice, kindness, love, any of the values most of us agree are desirable even apart from their specific religious base or context."

● Finally, as to the February 23 editorial, "Strategy Time III," that was the proximate occasion for this extended response to your call.

For "real freedom of choice," I would point out that women in New York, because of the policies of this state and its budgetary commitments, are certainly free to choose. We have made enormous commitments to prenatal care, to nutrition, to family life education, to a whole array of programs for teens and others that guarantee the choice is free.

This response to your invitation, may not, I realize, contain everything *Commonweal* wishes it would, and some things with which it will disagree. My modest wish is that it does not constitute what you have labeled "ducking for cover."

Transforming the minds and hearts of individuals, on this issue and on others—the economy, foreign relations, the homeless, the historic struggle of minorities and women, the environment, for example—is an essential, and quintessentially American and Catholic, work.

Commonweal deserves praise for continuing to engage in that work. At the end of the speech I gave at Notre Dame, I said this: "The problems created by the matter of abortion are complex and confounding. Nothing is clearer to me than my inadequacy to find compelling solutions to all of their moral, legal, and social implications. I—and many others like me—are eager for enlightenment, eager to learn new and better ways to manifest respect for the deep reverence for life that is our religion and our instinct."

I feel fortunate that New York is home to journals like *Commonweal* and *America*, willing to undertake the task of easing that inadequacy.

MARIO M. CUOMO
Governor of New York

The editors will respond in the coming issue.

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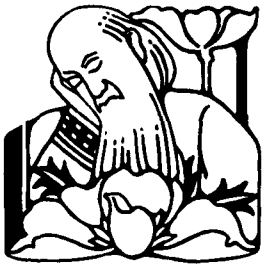

Faith and Intelligence:

Are They Compatible?

Among the well-educated the myth still circulates that religion is the preserve of the dim-witted, unlettered, and irrational. Yet recently *The New York Times Magazine* carried an article on the "return to religion" among intellectuals. From the Ivy League to Vanderbilt to Stanford, and among inquisitive people generally, there's an undeniable renewal of interest in the questions traditional religion raises and seeks to answer. This fascination is largely a result of the failures of secular substitutes for religion (such as positivism, hedonism, technological utopianism, egotism, Freudianism, and Marxism) to give abidingly satisfying answers to the truly significant puzzles in life: goodness, suffering, justice, love, death, and the meaning of it all.

The *Times* article discussed the NEW OXFORD REVIEW as part of this return to religion, and rightly so. We at the REVIEW are spearheading today's intellectual engagement with what Daniel Bell terms "the sacred." Among other things, we scrutinize the religious dimensions of the great events and issues of the past and present, and probe the wisdom offered not only by the Bible and Church fathers, but also by such diverse giants as St. Francis, Aquinas, Dante, Thomas More, Kierkegaard, Newman, Dostoyevsky, Chesterton, Bonhoeffer, Eliot, Silone, Maritain, Niebuhr, Solzhenitsyn, Dorothy Day, C.S. Lewis, Martin Luther King Jr., Flannery O'Connor, Lech Walesa, Mother Teresa, Graham Greene, Malcolm Muggeridge, and Pope John Paul II.

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